Simple Studies in Romans

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BY

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FOREWORD

It is fitting that Romans should be located at the beginning of the New Testament epistles, because of its fundamental character, setting forth as it does in logical order of sequence the things that are elementary in "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

In these studies the purpose is to help the children of God to a clear understanding of the wonderful truths set forth in Romans, to the end that they may be established. In the final chapter of the book it is declared that God is able to establish His people, and it is pointed out that His means of thus establishing them is according to what Paul calls his own gospel, "and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery." Paul's gospel, including "the revelation of the mystery," finds its beginnings in Romans. The body of truth revealed to Paul had been "kept secret since the ages began, but now is made manifest," starting with Romans (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:5-7). The Thessalonian epistles, and some others, were written before this book, but it is hard to resist the conclusion that the Holy Spirit has superintended the arrangement of the books of the New Testament, and that among the epistles, Romans is rightly first.

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The late Dr. Stifler, whose admirable outline we have followed to a considerable extent, used to tell his students that the chief difficulty connected with the study of Romans was that the Lord's people would not believe it. "It is not," said he, "that the book is hard to understand, but that so many who read it refuse to believe what it says." Doubtless this is the main difficulty with all Bible study: how can we understand what God has said unless we begin by believing it? May God Himself bring us to this study in the right attitude of mind and heart, and deliver us from the sin of unbelief, "which doth so easily beset us!"

For we may not forget that this book speaks to us with authority. Penned by the accredited representative of the risen Christ, it is as if He Himself had written it. The words we read here are God's words, written by God's man as he is moved by the Holy Spirit. With all the Scriptures, they are God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16).

Dr. C. I. Scofield says *("Correspondence Course"):*

"Not one word of the New Testament had been written when Christ departed from the earth; but we have His express authority for receiving it as the inspired Word of God. (a) He said plainly that He would leave the revelation of truth unfinished (Jno. 16:12); (b) He promised that this revelation should be completed after His departure (Jno. 16:13); (c) He chose certain persons to receive such additional revelations, and to be His witnesses, preachers and teachers after His departure (Jno. 16:13; 15:27; Ac. 1:8; Mt. 28:19, 20;

Ac. 9: 15-17); (d) Knowing beforehand what they would write, He gave their words precisely the same authority as His own (Mt. 10: 14, 15; Lk. 10: 16; Jno. 13: 20; 17: 20)."

All this, of course, applies equally to the writings of Paul, who received his commission from the hands of the risen and glorified Christ. Paul comes to us with the very words of Him Who is Head over all things to the Church. To again quote Dr. Scofield:

"We conclude, upon the testimony of Christ, and of the writers themselves, that the Scriptures are verbally inspired—that the Holy Spirit gave the **words.** The notion that 'the inspiration is in the concept,' and not in the words, is contrary to the express declaration of the witnesses who **knew."**

Our epistle falls naturally into four great parts, which may be indicated and easily remembered by the use of four key-words, namely:

I. SIN. Here we are told the naked truth about sin; here we see the awful guilt of man, and his utter helplessness. This division reaches to chapter 3: 20, where every mouth is stopped and the whole world brought in guilty before God.

II. RIGHTEOUSNESS. Having shown the desperate need resulting from the ravages of the dread disease of sin, the Spirit of God comes to pour oil and wine into the wounds, and to show how our need is fully met in the gospel. This division extends to the end of the 8th chapter.

III. VINDICATION. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 are a vindication of the ways of God in His dealings with Israel.

IV. WALK. Growing out of the doctrines of the epistle, and based upon them, are the exhortations of the final chapters, 12 to 16, calling upon Christians to walk in the way of holiness. This is ever the Holy Spirit's method: first He tells us the truth about our position, and then He seeks to bring us practically into conduct befitting that position. For example, in Eph. 5:8 it is written:

"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."

Indeed, this should be the object of all Bible study. Truth itself is valueless except it be transmuted into life. "Knowledge," by itself, "puffeth up." "If ye **know** these things, happy are ye if ye **do** them."

PROLOGUE

(Chapter 1 : 1-17)

The prefatory paragraphs in the first seventeen verses of chapter 1, are two:

I. The Salutation (1-7).

1. **"Paul, Jesus Christ's slave"** (1). This is the true meaning of the opening phrase. The word translated "servant" in the common versions is literally "bondman," that is "slave." Thus this man at once identifies himself: he is the Lord's slave; he has taken His yoke upon him, and is His willing bondservant. He has known the bondage of sin, but this is a bondage of love. The yoke he now wears is easy, and the burden is light (Mat. 11 : 28, 29).

2. **"A called apostle"** (1). Not merely "called an apostle," and much less "called **to be** an apostle." Many of the commentators, and even the translators, break down here. Most of them have "called to be," and the Twentieth Century New Testament goes so far as to render it "called **to become an apostle.**" Alford points out that in Paul's case, his call to the apostleship was a very special one. He was "called, and that to the very highest office, of an apostle; and even

more—among the apostles, not one by original selection, but one **specially called.**" And on this point Bengel says:

"The rest of the apostles were educated by long intercourse with Jesus, and were called first to follow Him, and obey Him, then put forth as apostles. Paul, beforetime a persecutor, was suddenly made an apostle by special calling. In like manner, the Jews were God's people by promise; the Greeks, by simple calling. Thus the **called apostle** had a similitude and relation to the **called saints"** (verse 7).

Paul, then, was an apostle by call, even the call of the risen Christ. It becomes us, therefore, to heed well the message he brings us. He speaks, not as a mere messenger, but as an apostle—a "legate," as Murdock puts it. The word apostle means "a sent one," but in its New Testament sense it stands for one who is sent clothed with full authority to speak and act for the divine Sender.

3. **"Separated unto the gospel of God"** (1). Paul had no difficulty in classifying himself; he knew where he belonged, and to Whom. He was the Lord's slave, and his particular business was in connection with "the gospel of God"—God's good news. He was "a chosen vessel," dedicated to a certain particular use (Ac. 9:15). His work was marked out for him even from his birth (Gal. 1:15), though it took a long time for him to discover that fact.

"The theme of Romans," says Dr. Scofield (*"Reference Bible"*),

"is the 'gospel of God' (1:1), the very widest possible designation of the whole body of redemption truth, for it is He with Whom is 'no respect of persons;' and Who is not 'the God of the Jews only,' but 'of the Gentiles also' (2:11; 3:29). Accordingly, 'all the world' is found guilty (3:19), and a redemption is revealed as wide as the need, upon the alone condition of faith. Not only does Romans embody in the fullest way the doctrines of grace in relation to salvation, but in three remarkable chapters (9-11) the great promises to Israel are reconciled with the promises concerning the Gentiles, and the fulfilment of the former shown to await the completion of the church and coming of the Deliverer out of Zion (11:25-27). The key-phrase is 'the righteousness of God' (1:17; 3:21, 22)."

4. **"Which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures"** (2). In the Greek there is no article preceding "Holy Scriptures," though the Old Testament is clearly indicated by the mention of God's prophets, and the insertion of the article is therefore perhaps warranted. The point in the statement is that the gospel was revealed in fulfilment of promises which God had made (compare 1 Pet. 1:11).

5. **"Concerning His Son"** (3). The person of Christ is the very substance of the gospel of God. According to the flesh He is, as the prophets predicted, a descendant of David. According to the Spirit of Holiness, He was shown to be the Son of God with power by resurrection: not His own resurrection merely, but that of others also,

"such as were dead" *(1911 Bible, margin)*. Mr. Darby says *("Synopsis")*:

"The subject of this gospel is, first of all, the Son of God. He has accomplished a work; but it is Himself Who is the true subject of the gospel. Now He is presented in a two-fold aspect: 1st, the object of the promises, Son of David according to the flesh; 2d, the Son of God in power, Who, in the midst of sin, walked by the Spirit in divine and absolute holiness (resurrection being the illustrious and victorious proof of Who He was, walking in this character). That is to say, resurrection is a public manifestation of that power by which He walked in absolute holiness during His life—a manifestation that He is the Son of God in power. He is clearly shown forth as Son of God in power by this means. Here it was no question of promise, but of power, of Him Who could enter into conflict with the death in which man lay, and overcome it completely; and that, in connection with the holiness which bore testimony during his life to the power of that Spirit by which He walked, and in which He guarded Himself from being touched by sin. It was in the same power by which He was holy in life absolutely that He was raised from the dead.

"In the ways of God on the earth He was the object and the fulfilment of the promises. With regard to the condition of man under sin and death, He was completely Conqueror of all that stood in His way, whether living or in resurrection. It was the Son of God Who was there, made known by resurrection according to the power that was in Him, a power that displayed itself according to the Spirit by the holiness in which He lived.

"What marvelous grace to see the whole power of evil—that dreadful door of death which closed upon the sinful life of man, leaving him to the inevitable judgment that he deserved—broken, destroyed, by Him,

Who was willing to enter into the gloomy chamber which shut in, and take upon Himself all the weakness of man in death, and thus completely and absolutely delivered him whose penalty He had borne in submitting to death! This victory over death, this deliverance of man from its dominion, by the power of the Son of God become man, when He had undergone it, and that as a sacrifice for sin, is the only ground of hope for mortal and sinful man. It sets aside all that sin and death have to say. It destroys, for him who has a portion in Christ, the seal of judgment upon sin, which is in death; and a new man, a new life, begins for him who has been held under it outside the whole scene. The whole effect of his former misery—a life founded on the value of that which the Son of God had there accomplished.

"In fine, we have, as the subject of the gospel, the Son of God, made of the seed of David after the flesh; and, in the bosom of humanity in death, declared to be the Son of God by resurrection,* Jesus Christ our Lord."

6. "Jesus Christ our Lord, through Whom we receive grace and apostleship" (4, 5, *R. V.*). Mr. Darby continues:

"The gospel was the gospel of God Himself; but it is by Jesus Christ the Lord that the apostle received his mission. **He** was the head of the work, and sent forth the labourers into the harvest which they were to reap in the world. The object of his mission, and its extent, was the obedience of faith(not obedience to the law) among **all** nations, establishing the authority and the value of the name of Christ. It was this name which should prevail and be acknowledged.

*"It is not said 'by His resurrection,' but 'by resurrection' abstractly. His own was the great proof; but that of every man is a proof likewise" *(Mr. Darby's note).*

"The gospel according to Paul," says Dr. Stifler, "is universal. It is not Jewish, but world-wide, a gospel for the Gentiles, for by resurrection Jesus transcended all Jewish connection and became the world's Saviour, a Saviour not by the obedience to law which was Mosaic, but by the power of an endless life. Life is universal. Thus Paul, by linking his apostolate with the raised Christ, gives first the character of his epistle, and secondly its scope. It is the epistle of divine life in Christ for all nations, on the condition of faith."

7. **"Among whom are ye also"** (6, 7). The children of God are here defined as:

(1) **"The called of Jesus Christ"** (6). Not, as in R. V., "called to be Jesus Christ's:" they were already His—His called ones, His bidden ones. Also, they are:

(2) **"Beloved of God"** (7). Surely they are that. As Jude puts it, all who have come to God by Jesus Christ are "called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ" (Jude 1, *R. V.*). But, further, they are,

(3) **"Called saints"** (7). Here again we have the question raised in the first verse. Christians —God's children by the new birth—are saints. They are not called to become saints; they became saints, instantaneously, at their new birth. This fact is set forth everywhere in the New Testament; and yet there is much confusion among the translators. Weymouth, for example, after rendering the phrase in verse 7, "called to

be saints," without intimating that he has supplied the words **"to be"** (which are certainly not in the original), says in a footnote,

> "Herein consists the supreme glory and supreme difficulty of the Christian life—that we are not simply to speak of Christ to others, and, if need be, do and dare great things for Him. By the power of His own most holy Spirit within us we are **to be saints."**

Undoubtedly we are called upon to live "as becometh saints" (Rom. 16:2), but it is highly important to see that if we have received the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord we are already saints—God's holy ones, set apart for Him, belonging to Him, saints by His own designation, His own calling—**called saints.** As Mr. Darby observes, " 'called to be saints' is not the meaning of the passage." He translates, with Young and many others, "called saints," and defines the phrase as meaning "saints by calling."

8. **"Grace to you and peace"** (7). This is ever the message for the saints, "from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

II. The Introduction (8-17).

1. **"First, I thank my God,"** etc., (8). It is the Spirit's way to first of all point out things to be commended; and this is true even in the case of epistles containing much severe censure, as, for example, 1st Corinthians. The occasion for thanksgiving in the case before us is that the Roman Christians were widely known for their

faith. That was surely something for which to be thankful. If the faith is held pure, the works will be forthcoming.

2. **"I long to see you"** (11). There were those who declared that Paul had neither desire nor intention to visit Rome. His message, they said, might do well enough for the provinces, but it would never do in Rome. Rome was too well informed, too cultured, too sophisticated, to be caught with such a message! But Paul here expresses a sincere longing to come to Rome.

3. **"I purposed to come unto you and was hindered hitherto"** (13, *R. V.*). In a similar passage (1 Thes. 2:18), Paul had declared that he had been hindered by Satan from visiting Thessalonica; doubtless that is his meaning here (compare also Rom. 15:22).

4. **"I am debtor"** (14). To be sure! And so is every Christian a debtor, to give the gospel to the whole world as rapidly as possible.

5. **"I am ready"** (15). That is a splendid companion-piece to the "I am debtor."

6. **"I am not ashamed"** (16, 17). No one can be ashamed of **the gospel**, though it is natural to be ashamed of some things that pass for the gospel. Paul was not ashamed,

(1) Because of the **nature** of the gospel: "it is **the power of God.**" It is unthinkable that any man should be ashamed of power—least of all, **God's** power; and the gospel is just that: God's power. Again, Paul was not ashamed,

(2) Because of the **aim** of the gospel: it is **"unto salvation."** And it always brings salvation —from the penalty, from the power, and finally from the very presence of sin—wherever it is received. Moreover, Paul was not ashamed,

(3) Because of the **scope** of the gospel: it is **to every one** that believeth." No one is barred; whosoever will may come. Further, Paul was not ashamed,

(4) Because of the sole **condition** attached to the gospel: it brings "salvation to every one that **believeth.**" This is all worked out in detail further on in the epistle. Finally, Paul was not ashamed,

(5) Because of the **revelation** of the gospel: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." This gospel revelation of God's righteousness, bestowed as a gift to men of faith, is all worked out in its proper place further on. Here it is mentioned as the fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy: "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4), and perhaps also to mark the sharp contrast between this gracious gospel revelation and the terrible revelation of God's wrath so vividly described in the language that follows.

FIRST MAIN DIVISION: THE SIN OF THE WORLD

(1:18 to 3:20)

Sin is now brought before us. The naked, horrid facts are dragged out and made to stand forth in the blazing light of God's holy wrath. This is needful and wholesome: for if we are ever to know the blessedness of God's remedy for the evil, we must first know something of the reality of the evil, and realize in some measure its enormity.

This terrible arraignment of guilty man at the bar of God is set forth in three subdivisions: (1) The guilt of the Gentiles; (2) The guilt of the Jews; and (3) Every mouth stopped.

I. The Guilt of the Gentiles *(1:18-32)*.

1. **"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven"** (18). There are, then, two revelations from heaven (compare verses 17 and 18). And, until the matter is explained, these revelations bring only terror to guilty man. The very last things he wants to be reminded of are God's **righteousness** and God's **wrath.** He has yet to learn the marvel of the gospel, by which God's righteousness actually becomes God's gift to sinful man,

and God's wrath gives place to God's loving-kindness. Meanwhile the divine wrath is directed "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." **Ungodliness** is the absence of conformity to the will of God. It leads to **unrighteousness** as to men's relation with each other. Being not right with God, they cannot be right in their dealings with one another. Then, too, they will not heed the facts. They "hold the truth in unrighteousness." Literally, it reads, as in the Revision, that they "hold **down** the truth in unrighteousness." The natural heart is desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9), and it will not fairly face the truth. This is the universal rule, whether the truth be revealed through the light of nature, or the moral sense, or the preaching of the gospel. Men hate the truth: the carnal mind is enmity against God; man holds down the truth in unrighteousness (compare Heb. 10:26-31; 2 Pet. 2:21, 22). In the passage we are just now considering it is shown that the Gentiles are thus guilty of turning from the truth, even before the gospel is preached to them. They are guilty, and the wrath of God is resting upon them. The reasons for this are strong ones.

2. **"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them"** (19). Men may speak of "the dim light of nature," but God does not so describe it.

3. **"For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen"** (20).

Not dimly, but **clearly.** And they are not only seen, but understood.

4. **"Being understood by the things that are made"** (20). This is the argument of the 19th Psalm: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork." Two things about God are thus "clearly seen" and "understood" by the heathen, whether they be evangelized or unevangelized—two things, revealed "by the things that are made:" (1) "even His **eternal power**" and (2) His "**Godhead.**" That is to say, it is revealed through nature itself that there is a Creator, and that that Creator is **God.** He ought, then, to be worshipped.

5. **"So that they are without excuse"** (20). There you have, in a word, God's own pronouncement concerning the guilt of the heathen world: "They are without excuse." This he proceeds to prove by setting forth in detail the awful facts of the world's history in connection with its relation to God from the beginning. There is here no "Ascent of Man." According to this truthful record, man did not rise from protoplasm toward the likeness of God. Far from it! God Himself tells us here that man has been going downward instead of upward. In the beginning he was in fellowship with God. From this high estate he fell, and his fall was complete. The apostasy of the Gentile world is here set forth in seven stages. And these are given as seven sufficient reasons for the declaration that men "are without excuse." They were without excuse—

(1) **"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful"** (21). This in itself is a scathing arraignment. Man in the beginning knew God: what a wonderful privilege! It is life to know Him (Jno. 17:3), and this was surely great cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving; but man utterly failed to maintain himself in this position of grace. He glorified not God **as God,** and he was ungrateful. Real thanksgiving toward God is altogether absent from the heart of the natural man to this day; and even among the chilren of God it is all too rare (see Col. 3:15).

(2) **"But became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened"** (21). The Revisers here read, "became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened." Man is always prone to turn to reason, rather than to God. Preferring the tree of knowledge to the tree of life, the inevitable result is that he became vain and puffed up (1 Cor. 8:1). The end of this process is darkness. The way into light is not by knowledge, but by faith. Men must believe God, or walk in darkness.

(3) **"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools"** (22). They were manifestly out of God's way, for it is never His way to reveal spiritual truth by means of worldly wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18-25).

(4) **"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man"** (23). This is the first step in idol-

atry—to represent God as being like man. It grows out of the lie of the serpent: "Ye shall be as God."

(5) **"And to birds"** (23). For idolatry does not stop with its first step. It progresses, and its progress is always progress in degradation.

(6) **"And fourfooted beasts"** (23). Yet another downward step.

(7) **"And creeping things"** (23). "The odiousness of idolatry," says Dr. Stifler, "is not alone in the immorality to which it leads, but that it is a caricature of God and a slander. It belongs to His glory that He is imperishable. He was likened to that which is corruptible. The very material of the image was a dishonour, as if one should erect a statute to a distinguished man to-day not in marble or bronze, but in chalk or putty. To liken God to man is idolatry. Men were to make no image of Him. Had they preserved their original conception of Him they would not have attempted it. In due time He gave an image of Himself in a sinless Being Who was animated with eternal life, 'the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person' (Heb. 1:3). If Jesus was not more than mortal, He was an idol. These professed sages did not stop with likening God to man; they figured Him as a bird, then as a quadruped, and finally as a reptile. There was the Apollo of the Greeks, the eagle of the Romans, the bull of the Egyptians, and the serpent of the Assyrians. Paul may be giving in this verse (23) the historical develop-

ment of idolatry, from its highest phase to its worst; or he may be setting it forth in climactic form; but certain it is that all these phases of the sin existed. In this review of the world's religion from the beginning, Paul teaches that man at the first was not an idolater. The origin of this sin is not contemporaneous with the appearance of man on the globe. Man did not work his way from fetishism through polytheism up to monotheism and the worship of the true God. His course was the reverse. From the beginning he did not grow better religiously, but worse. The Bible gives no evidence of idolatry among the antediluvians. Men in that age called on the name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26). The earliest mention of idolatry belongs to the days of Abraham (Josh. 24:2). Paul here gives the history and origin of idolatry. Men knew God and refused to worship Him. Idolatry followed as a psychological necessity. If there is a force of development inherent in man, a force tending upward, the gospel of the grace of God is an impertinence, and Paul might well be ashamed of it. And why has not this force manifested itself somewhat in the last two thousand years in Africa, in India, and in China? The idolatry of to-day is no better than that which grieved Paul" (*"The Epistle to the Romans," by J. M. Stifler*).

6. **"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness"** (24, 25). God's call is not to uncleanness but to holiness (1 Thes. 4:7). And when there is response to His call, He directs our

steps in the way of holiness. But when the truth of God is exchanged for a lie, and when worship is accorded to the creature instead of the Creator, it must follow that men become "slaves to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity" (Rom. 6:19). And could anything be sadder than to read, "Wherefore God gave them up?"

7. **"For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions"** (26, 27). Let Dr. Stifler again speak here. "This," he says *(Ibid.)*, "is the next long step downward. Originally man was chaste, but when he cast God off, his animal passions were unchained.....Twice in these verses we are told that 'God gave them up,' not passively, but actively. The reason is again given: 'Who changed the truth of God into the lie' of idolatry. They did not change a lie into truth. Man's course was not in that direction. They took 'the truth of God' which He gave them and perverted it to the falsehood of idol-worship. This was the cause of that vileness whose hideous description we have here. **'For even their women!'** There is point in that word 'even.' Woman is the purer, the more modest, of the sexes, has propensities less ardent; but even she became worse than beastly and equaled vile man in his depravity. The corruption that got into the blood of the race by the fall did not show itself at once. The earlier families and tribes of the world were pure; God kept them so. Whatever morality there is in the world is due not to human nature, but to the restraining power of God. When God 'gave them

up,' the original corruption in the blood showed itself in foul moral ulcers, and human virtue proved to be less than that of the beasts of the field, among which the barriers of sex are not crossed."

8. "**And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind**" (28-32). And behold where that "reprobate mind" has taken them. The climax is reached in the final verse of the chapter, which is also a summing up of the whole case against the Gentile world. Men know the judgment of God against sin, that its sure wages is death; and yet they not only go on in sin, but actually take pleasure in the depravity of others. This is the state of "things as they are." To meet this condition calls for a remedy of tremendous power, even "the power of God."

II. The Guilt of the Jews (2: 1-29).

1. "**Therefore thou art inexcusable**" (1). In chapter 1 the Gentiles were shown to be without excuse, and here the same indictment is brought against the Jew—"thou art without excuse" (*R. V.*). "The address," says Alford, "passes gradually to the Jews. They were the people who **judged**—who pronounced all Gentiles to be born in sin and under condemnation: doubtless there were also proud and censorious men among the Gentiles, to whom the rebuke might apply, but these are hardly in the apostle's mind. This is evident by comparing the charge, '**thou that judg-**

est doest the same things,' with vs. 21-23, where the same charge is implied in a direct address to the Jew."

"In depicting the sin of the Gentile in the first chapter," says Dr. Stifler, "Paul did not name him. It was not necessary. The picture was so true to life that no one could fail to see who sat for it. The author has been assured more than once by returned missionaries from China and India that when this first chapter was read to intelligent natives of these heathen lands they have hesitated to believe that it was from the missionary's sacred Book, suspecting that the missionary had written it himself as a description of what he had seen since he came among them. In this second chapter Paul has no one but the Jew in view. He does not mention his name until the discussion has advanced some distance. It was easy to prove the Gentile a sinner. He claimed nothing for himself, and his immorality was patent to every eye; Paul had only to point to the facts. But in the case of the Jew all was different. He had a divinely-given system of religion. In the letter it was never better observed than when Paul wrote. The Jew as a son of Abraham considered himself righteous by the law. To convince him of sin was no easier than it is to-day to convince a hollow Christianity of its fatal error. Paul has still his statement in view, that the gospel is the only power of God for salvation, and nothing to be ashamed of. If Judaism can save

men, the gospel is an impertinence; hence the radical failure of the Jew must be shown."

2. **"The judgment of God is according to truth"** (2). This is the first of four principles here laid down as to the judgment of God. The Jew must not suppose that merely because he knew the will of God he therefore was safe from judgment. If he knew the Word of God, he must know that by that Word he should be judged (compare Jno. 12:47, 48).

3. **"To every man according to his deeds"** (6). This is the second principle of judgment: it shall not be according to how much a man may know, but according to what he has done about it —according to his deeds. Of course, this is not the gospel: that is to come later; here the point is that the Jew, as well as the Gentile, is in sore need of the gospel.

4. **"For there is no respect of persons with God"** (11). This is the third principle of judgment: it will be strictly impartial (compare Deut. 10:17; Ezk. 18:4; Ac. 10:34; Rom. 3:29, 30; 10:12, 13). The Gentiles who have sinned without the law must perish, for "the wages of sin is death;" and the Jews who have sinned under the law must likewise perish, for "the wages of sin is death." Do not make the mistake here of reading "gospel" for "law." This is to miss the point entirely. What the Spirit by the apostle is showing is that apart from the gospel there could no flesh be saved, either Gentile or Jew. He is paving the way for the gospel.

5. **"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel"** (16). This is the fourth principle of judgment: "according to my gospel." Not according to the law, thank God! for then no flesh could be saved. As for the Jews—"the hearers of the law" (v. 13)—they could not be justified, for they had not **done** the law; and as for the Gentiles, who had not the law (v. 14), they were nevertheless condemned, for all had "sinned without law." This will all be brought out "in the day when God shall judge the **secrets** of men." Ah, who can stand in such a day as that?—"the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God!" Only righteousness will pass muster in that day—real righteousness, righteousness of the heart, righteousness even as to "the secrets of men!" "Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in **righteousness** by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Ac. 17:31). Except for the gospel, not a man could stand in that day. And we have not yet come to the gospel. Let us first see the great need for it.

6. **"Behold, thou art called a Jew"** (17). The implication here is that one might be called a Jew without being a Jew. Paul is proving that the so-called Jew is a helpless sinner in spite of all his boastings. He rested in the law, utterly failing to recognize it as an instruction in righteous-

ness (2 Tim. 3:16); and made his boast of God, forgetting that God is a just God; he knew His will (18), and it never occurred to him that he ought to be obeying that will; he was a student of the Scriptures, able to "distinguish the things that differ" (18, *R. V., margin*), being instructed out of the law; he was therefore confident that he was a guide of the blind, a light of them (the Gentiles) which were in darkness (19), an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law (20). Here is a complete picture of what the Jew thought of himself. What God thought of him was another matter: the Holy Spirit is here proving him a lost sinner. Let us see.

7. **"Teachest thou not thyself?"** (21). Evidently the Jews had not thought of that. For the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them (v. 24), as had been written of them beforehand (Isa. 52:5; Ezk. 36:20).

8. **"For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law"** (25). A big and important "if," surely! The Jew must learn that circumcision in itself could not save; it was after all only the sign of the covenant. "'But,' says the replier, 'circumcision is a great fact.' 'I confess it,' rejoins the apostle, 'but **when?** When a man has that which is inward in the heart.' And see here the apostle's wisdom, how fittingly he has introduced his argument about it. He did not begin with it at once, since it was held in such great estimation: but when he has shown that they were

offenders in a still greater matter, and were guilty of blasphemy towards God, then at length, having secured his readers' condemnation of them, and having lowered them from their pre-eminence, he introduces his argument about circumcision, confident that no one ever will be found as its unlimited apologist" (*Chrysostom*).

9. **"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly"** (28, 29). This summing up should be connected with the 17th verse. "Behold, thou art called a Jew." Well, "he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." This goes to the core of the matter. "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the **inward** parts" (Ps. 51:6). The circumcision which is merely outward is in God's sight only "the concision." The true circumcision consists of those "which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:2, 3).

III. EVERY MOUTH STOPPED (3:1-20).

1. **"What advantage then hath the Jew?"** (1, 2). Paul, in the question and answer given here, is dealing with an imaginary objector, as he often does in his writings. This objector, replying to the sweeping indictment against the Jew in chapter 2, asks what, then, is the use of being a Jew; what profit is there of circumcision?

If it does not save, what is the use of it? To this the answer is "Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God" (*R. V.*). That was surely a great honour.

2. **"For what if some did not believe?"** (3, 4). The King James Version is decidedly weak here. The American Revision reads: "For what if some were without faith? shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God? God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar." The 1911 Bible is even better: "For what if some did not believe? shall their faithlessness destroy God's faithfulness? God forbid! nay, let God be true, though every man be false; as it is written, That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged." This citation from the 51st Psalm voices the sentiment of every true child of God: Let God be justified at all events! The ways of Jehovah are right ways! He is faithful!

3. **"Is God unrighteous?"** (5). This from the objector: as Paul explains, "I speak as a man." The issue raised is this: If God's righteousness is made manifest by men's unrighteousness, then God does wrong in taking vengeance. The answer is ready: "God forbid! for then how shall God judge the world?" This is a reference, doubtless, to Gen. 18:25, where Abraham puts the question to Jehovah, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (compare also Ac. 17:31). What an unspeakable calamity it would be if God

should ever do wrong! Let God be found true!

4. **"Why yet am I also judged?"** (7, 8). Again, the objector. His point now is that if the truth (i. e., the truthfulness) of God has been made more manifest and glorious by the untruthfulness of men, then men ought not to be condemned, but commended instead. And in that case it would be better to go on in evil for the Lord's sake! Indeed, some had slanderously reported that Paul himself advocated this course of conduct: "Let us do evil that good may come." This principle of Jesuitism the apostle vehemently repudiates. "Paul now with one stroke brings the whole objection to its logically absurd conclusion. If sin enhances the glory of God, and therefore is no longer guilt, why, the more we sin, the brighter this grace. Let us do all the evil we can, for the more evil the more praise to His name! Some had affirmed that this is the apostle's own doctrine. In their righteous condemnation of it they condemn themselves in the claim that God cannot punish sin, because it promotes His glory, for this claim is the very essence of the hateful sentiment. And thus he has come around in most skilful fashion to the assertion with which he began against the Jew: 'Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou **condemnest thyself'** (2: 1). He joins with them in repudiating the godless maxim, but he does not go with them in holding it. They 'slanderously report' him who say he does" (*Stifler*).

5. **"What then?"** (9-20). The argument of the first main division is brought to a conclusion in this paragraph, and the whole world is declared guilty. The query of verse 9, "What then? are we better than they?" is probably a wrong reading. The marginal rendering in the 1911 Bible is better, "What then? do we excuse ourselves?" The meaning of the question is evidently this: "What then? Have we an excuse? Is there any excuse left? Is there any escape from the final verdict of universal guilt?" This, at any rate, is the question answered in the verses that follow: "No, in no wise! for we have before accused both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin" (9). He does not say, with the King James Version, that he has **proved** this: he has only "laid it to their charge" *(R. V.)*, and he is now about to bring forth the proof. For this he goes to the Scripture:

(1) **"There is none righteous, no, not one!"** (10-12). The first proof, to the end of the 12th verse, is taken from Psalms 14 and 53. It is God's Word, and there is not so much as a single exception to the sweeping declaration. In the whole human race, not even one solitary individual can stand before God in his own merit. "Not one!" None righteous; none that understandeth; none that seeketh after God; all turned aside; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, **no, not so much as** ONE! So much for human **character.** Now what of human **conduct?**

(2) **"Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"** (13, 14). This terrible count is taken from Ps. 5:9; 140:3; and 10:7, and it deals with man's mouth, as to what he **speaks.** This is an important part of conduct. But there is another part. How does man **act?** What does he **do?** Let us go on.

(3) **"Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known"** (15-17; compare Prov. 1:16; 6:17; Isa. 59:7, 8). Man's actions, then, are no better in God's sight than his words. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). Long, long ago, the end of all flesh came before Him. O, what a need for the gospel! How utterly hopeless are we without it!

(4) **"There is no fear of God before their eyes"** (18; compare Ps. 36:1). Here is given the reason for it all. It was because there was no fear of God before their eyes that men departed so far from Him. It was the same with the Jew as with the Gentile: "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful" (Rom. 1:21).

Now we have come to the end of the indictment against the world. As for the Gentile, he was declared guilty and without excuse in chapter 1; and the law itself settled the matter for the Jew: "it speaketh to them that are under the

law;" with the result that every mouth is stopped, and the whole world is brought in guilty before God.

The word "Therefore" in verse 20 should read "Because." The meaning is that the whole world is brought in guilty because no flesh is justified by works. Judged by their own merits, as to their deeds, Gentile and Jew alike are guilty. This is the end of the matter: God has spoken, and He is the righteous Judge of all the earth. He says: "Guilty!"

This ends the first main division of the epistle. Sin has done its deadly work, and man is lost, and undone, and guilty before God. Unless grace find a way out, there is no hope. Through the law has come only the knowledge of sin; through the law there never can come salvation. But, thanks be to God! He has found a way out! This we shall see in the next section.

SECOND MAIN DIVISION: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

(3:21 to 8:39)

In the foregoing studies it has been shown that by sin man had been ruined, and rendered utterly unable to help himself. He was guilty—every man, without a solitary exception—and could do nothing to make himself acceptable to God. Judged by his own works—surely a righteous judgment—he was condemned.

The Gentiles were guilty, because when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; and as a result of this they had fallen into gross idolatry and indescribable immorality. The terrible picture of the state of things in the Gentile world, drawn by the Spirit of Truth in Rom. 1, is reflected even in the writings of the heathen philosophers. "We must say of ourselves," said Seneca, "that we are evil, have been evil, and—unhappily, I must add—shall be also in the future." "I am tossed," said the same writer, "upon a sea of pure infirmity. .....The human mind is by nature perverse, and strives after what is forbidden and perilous." And he uttered a word almost prophetic when he wrote, "Nobody can deliver himself; someone must stretch out a hand to lift him up."

As for the Jew, he was at least equally guilty with the Gentiles, for, with a fuller revelation of God, he failed miserably to walk in the light vouchsafed to him. The law had only emphasized his sorry plight, for "through the law is the knowledge of sin." Tested by the law every Jew must ultimately find himself in the evil case of Saul of Tarsus—Judaism's finest specimen—and cry out, "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" The situation in Jewry had become worse instead of better since the days of the prophets, who had declared that judgment was turned away backward, and justice stood afar off; for truth was fallen in the street, and equity could not enter. "Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey!" (Isa. 59:14, 15).

Thus the whole problem was thrust back upon God Himself. And, blessed be His name! He found a way out. "Jehovah saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment. And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore HIS ARM BROUGHT SALVATION UNTO HIM; AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IT SUSTAINED HIM" (Isa. 59:15, 16). He it was that was gracious to man, and delivered him from going down to the pit; He it was that found a ransom (Job 33:24). Without sacrificing His own righteousness—which would have been, of course, impossible—He yet found a way to bestow righteousness upon unrighteous man. And that is the theme of the second main division

of the epistle to the Romans: righteousness, gospel-righteousness, the gift of God.

I. Gospel-Righteousness is by Faith (3:21-31).

1. **"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested"** (21). Gospel-righteousness is apart from the law. This is the meaning of the expression, "without the law," in the King James Version. The Revision reads correctly: "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested." We have already seen that the law, instead of saving guilty man, only increased and emphasized his guilt. The righteousness of the gospel, then, is entirely apart from the law. This is only barely mentioned here, for it is to come up for fuller discussion further on in the epistle.

2. **"Being witnessed by the law and the prophets"** (21). Though gospel-righteousness is "apart from the law," yet the law testifies to it. We shall come to this again. That the righteousness revealed in the gospel is not contrary to the Old Testament Scriptures, is the theme of the fourth chapter. There we shall see that salvation has always been by grace through faith—and that is the righteousness of the gospel; it is the **revelation** of it that is new.

3. **"Even the righteousness of God"** (22). This gospel-righteousness is God's own righteousness. And in the tenth chapter we shall see that "the righteousness of God" is just Christ Him-

self, Who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "Under law," says Dr. Scofield (*"Correspondence Course"*), "God required righteousness **from** man; under grace He gives righteousness **to** man." According to Cunninghame, the righteousness of God in this chapter is "that righteousness which God's righteousness requires Him to require." Hodge's definition is "that righteousness of which God is the Author, which is of avail before God, which meets and secures His approval." Brookes says it is "that righteousness which the Father requires, the Son became, the Holy Spirit convinces of, and faith secures." Moorehead says it is "the sum total of all that God commands, demands, approves, and Himself provides." And Paul defines it as "Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us.....righteousness" (1 Cor. 1:30).

4. **"Through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe"** (*22, R. V.*). Gospel-righteousness is bestowed in response to faith. This is a restatement of 1:16, 17, and it comes in for full treatment in the tenth chapter. The point is that the righteousness of the gospel is not a **by-works** righteousness, but a **by-faith** righteousness.

5. **"For there is no difference"** (*22-26*). The way was prepared for this statement by the preceding phrase, " unto **all** and upon **all** them that believe." This also was said in 1:16, 17. The righteousness of the gospel is for all. As Stifler says, "all need it, and no class of men has any-

thing else to present before God for salvation." In Tit. 2:11, it is written that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." A universal need must be met by a universal remedy. "There is no distinction" (*R. V.*):

(1) **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (23). There is no distinction as to the need. This has been very clearly shown in the first main division. "The glory of God" here may mean Christ Himself as God's standard, "the brightness of His glory" (Heb. 1:3), and surely all have come short of the glory of God in this sense. But more likely it has the meaning of the identical expression in Jno. 12:43, where it is translated "the praise of God" in the King James Version and changed to "the glory of God" by the Revisers. God cannot praise or approve anything short of perfect righteousness, and no man can therefore merit His approbation. "All have sinned, and fall short."

(2) **"Being justified freely"** (24). There is no distinction as to the remedy. This phase of our Lord's redemptive work is reserved for the fifth chapter. But here Paul has arrived at his first statement in the epistle defining the gospel itself. We have been seeing something of its **power,** but we have now come to its **description.** The gospel is the "good news" of salvation. Of this salvation we here learn seven things:

(a) **That it is free.** This is the force of the word "freely," i. e., without cost to the saved one. He is justified (declared or pronounced right-

eous), and, so far as he is concerned, it is "without money and without price."

(b) **That it is by the unmerited favor of God** (24), "by His grace."

(c) **That it is by means of Christ's redemptive work** (24, 25), "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth a propitiation" *(1911 Bible)*. Redemption is a buying back—"a buying off, by means of a price paid" *(Alford)*. Propitiation is the equivalent of "mercy seat."

(d) **That it is for those who believe** (25); it is "through faith."

(e) **That it is based upon blood-shedding** (25), "through faith in His blood." There has been much theological hair-splitting as to whether this reading should not be changed to "by his blood." "Philosophy and theology have busied themselves here, without reaching unanimity," says Dr. Stifler, "on a question which Paul does not hint at—the relation of the sacrifice to its end. God freely justifies men by means of the ransom power in Christ Jesus. He is such because God has set Him forth in His blood as a sufficient propitiation. Whatever reason may say about such a sacrifice, Paul is satisfied with it because it is God's own. God is satisfied with the offering, for He provided it. It becomes a propitiation 'through faith,' because faith says of it just what God does—I accept what God has provided for my sin. That ends the difference between God and the sinner, and they are at one in Christ

Jesus. This is justification by faith." Dr. Scofield says: "It was upon the mercy seat that the atoning blood was sprinkled on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16:14). The idea is not that God was made loving toward the sinner by the shedding of sacrificial blood, but that the sacrificial blood evinced the sinner's acceptance of the righteous sentence of God's holy law, so that God could still be just and yet be propitious to the sinner. The sinner's faith in Christ includes 'faith in His blood' (Rom. 3:25); that is, faith in Christ as 'the Lamb of God' voluntarily offering Himself on the sinner's behalf in vindication of God's holy law. The cross enables God to 'be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.'"

(f) **That it is retrospective in its effect** (25), "to show His righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God." The King James Version is very faulty here: our quotation is from the Revision. The idea is that during the ages before the cross, God had **apparently** been lax with reference to sins. As Paul says in Ac. 17, He "winked at" them. The death of the cross was needful to set God right in the eyes of men, "to show His righteousness." When the Lord Jesus died on Calvary, it was as much for the sins of Adam as for those of men living after the time of Calvary. God had for centuries labored under the suspicion that in the passing over of sins He had somehow sacrificed His righteousness. It might be supposed that He had shown mercy at the expense of

justice. This, of course, is impossible with a righteous God, and the Lord Jesus "must be lifted up," if for no other reason than to show that His Father was righteous. "For four thousand years," says Godet, "the spectacle presented by mankind to the whole moral universe was, so to speak, a continual scandal.....Divine righteousness seemed to sleep; one might even have asked if it existed. Men sinned here below and yet they lived. They sinned on and yet reached in safety a hoary old age. Where were the 'wages of sin?' It was this relative impunity which rendered a solemn manifestation of righteousness necessary." In the passage before us, Dean Alford translates, "for the showing forth of His righteousness, because of the passing over of the former sins, in the forbearance of God;" and says: "i. e., because God had overlooked the sins that had passed in His forbearance; and the words contain the reason why God would manifest His judicial righteousness; on account of the overlooking of the sins which had passed, in the forbearance of God; i. e., to vindicate that character for justice, which might seem, owing to the suspension of God's righteous sentence on sin in former ages in His forbearance, to be placed in question: to show, that though He did not then fully punish for sin, and though He did then set forth inadequate means of (subjective) justification,—yet He did both, not because His justice was slumbering, nor because the nature of His righteousness was al-

tered,—but because He had provided a way whereby sin might be forgiven, and He might be just. Observe, the fact mentioned is not forgiveness, nor remission, as the Authorized Version erroneously renders it, but **passing over,** or **overlooking,** which is the work of **forbearance** (see Ac. 17: 30), whereas forgiveness is the work of grace,—see chap. 2: 4: nor do **the former sins** mean, 'the sins of each man which precede his conversion,' but **those of the whole world before the death of Christ.** See the very similiar words, Heb. 9: 15."

(g) **That it is also prospective in its effect** (26). That is to say, the work of Christ on the cross had in view those who should live afterward, as well as those who had lived before the cross was set up. There is a second showing-forth here. The supplied words, "I say," in both the King James Version and the Revision, spoil the sense. Paul is not merely repeating in verse 26 what he has already said in verse 25: he is saying something new. Rotherham's reading of the passage (vs. 25, 26) clears up the matter:

"Whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory covering, through faith in His blood, for the showing forth of His righteousness, by reason of the passing-by of the previously committed sins, in the forbearance of God,—with a view to a showing forth of His righteousness in the present season, that He might be righteous even when declaring righteous him that hath faith in Jesus."

Here is the great triumph of the gospel. God Himself is justified, and He succeeds in justifying sinful men! By the gospel God's righteousness is shown as to the past; His righteousness is shown as to "the present time"; and His righteousness is shown in His justification of those who, on their own merits, are only unrighteous! Surely, this is a wonderful salvation, and He is a wonderful Saviour!

6. **"Where is boasting then?"** (27-30). The gospel excludes human boasting, and this not on the principle of works, but on the principle of faith. The proof is given in v. 28, where "therefore" should read "for." Both the King James Version and the Revision fail us here. The force of the word is "Because." In this verse we have the reason for the exclusion of all human glorying; namely, "that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law" *(1911 Bible)*. And that this latter statement is true is shown by implication in the queries that follow: "Or is God the God of Jews only? is he not the God of Gentiles also?" The Gentiles had not the law; it had been given to the Jews alone. If therefore justification was by means of the law, the Gentiles were shut out. But this was impossible, for God is the God "of Gentiles also: if so be that God is one, and He shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." Since there is but one God, there can be but one means of justification. "A righteous judge could not render contradictory decisions where all are

alike guilty, and certainly He could not decide in such a way that His judgment to save some would necessarily exclude others. The unity of God makes salvation by faith exclusive of every other means" *(Stifler)*.

7. **"Do we then make void the law through faith?"** (31). The question raised here is a natural one. If salvation is by grace and apart from the law, does it not follow that the law is made void? "God forbid!" says the apostle, "nay, we establish the law." "The sinner establishes the law in its right use and honour," says Dr. Scofield, "by confessing his guilt, and acknowledging that by it he is justly condemned. Christ, on the sinner's behalf, establishes the law by enduring its penalty, death" *("Reference Bible")*. Moffatt's translation of verses 27-31 is interesting:

> "Then where is the exulting? Shut out. By what kind of law? A law of deeds? No, by a law of faith. For we reckon that a man is justified by faith apart from deeds of law. What! is God only the God of Jews? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Assuredly, of Gentiles also, seeing that it is one God who shall justify the circumcision in consequence of faith and the uncircumcision through the same faith. Then 'through faith' do 'we annul the law?' God forbid! we uphold the law."

The theme of the fourth chapter is suggested by this question and answer. "The law" here means not only the Ten Words of Sinai, but the Old Testament in its entirety. Is it set aside, or made of none effect? No, far from it! In the

fourth chapter it is shown that the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel is indeed "witnessed by the law and the prophets."

II. Gospel-Righteousness is not Contrary to the Old Testament (ch. 4.)

1. **"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?"** (1). The force of the language here used is, "What then shall we say was gained by Abraham our father after the flesh?" What did Abraham gain, and how did he gain it? If his justification was by works, then he had ground for boasting.

2. **"But not before God"** (2). This word, "before God," is the key to the seeming conflict between Paul and James (compare Jas. 2:21-24). James speaks of justification in the sight of men, while Paul is considering justification "before God." That no flesh is justified by works "in the sight of God" is Paul's contention, and James supplements this by pointing out that the man of faith can **show** his faith only by his works. Faith is visible only to the eye of God; it manifests itself by its works. Faith, which only God can see, justifies in His sight; works justify in the sight of men.

3. **"For what saith the Scripture?"** (3). This appeal "to the law and to the testimony" is to prove that Abraham's salvation was by faith: "Abraham **believed** God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). This

is righteousness by faith; it is not a **by-works** righteousness; it is a **by-faith** righteousness—that is, **gospel**-righteousness. As James again points out, it took many years for this faith of Abraham's to prove itself to outward observation, but God knew all about it when Abraham **believed** Him. "The whole question," says Dean Alford, "so much mooted between Protestants on the one hand, and Romanists, Arminianists and Socinians on the other, as to whether this righteousness was reckoned (1) **by means of faith,** being **God's righteousness imputed** to the sinner; or (2) **on account of faith,** so that God made Abraham righteous **on account of the merit of his faith,** lies in fact in a small compass, if what has gone before be properly taken into account. The apostle has proved Jews and Gentiles to be **all under sin:** utterly unable by works of their own to attain to righteousness. Now **faith,** in the second sense mentioned above, is strictly and entirely **a work,** and as such would be the **efficient cause** of man's justification,—which, by what has preceded, **it cannot be.** It will therefore follow, that it was not the **act of believing** which was reckoned to him as a righteous act, or on account of which perfect righteousness was laid to his charge, but that the **fact of his trusting God to perform His promise introduced him into the blessing promised.** God declared His purpose (Gen. 12:3) of blessing all the families of the earth in Abraham, and again (Gen. 15:5) that his seed should be as the

stars of heaven, when as yet he had no son. Abraham **believed this promise, and became partaker of this blessing.** But this blessing was, **justification by faith in Christ.** Now Abraham could not, in the strict sense of the words, be justified by faith **in Christ,**—nor is it necessary to suppose that he directed his faith forward to the promised Redeemer in Person; but in so far as God's gracious purpose was revealed to him, he grasped it by faith, and that righteousness which was implied, so far, in it, was imputed to him. Some have said (for example, Tholuck) that the parallel is incomplete—Abraham's **faith** having been reckoned to him for righteousness, whereas, in our case, **the righteousness of Christ** is reckoned to us as our righteousness, **by** faith. But the incompleteness lies in the nature of the respective cases. In his case, **the righteousness itself** was not yet manifested. He believed **implicitly,** taking the **promise, with all it involved and implied, as true.** This, then, was his way of entering into the promise, and by means of his faith was bestowed upon him that full justification which that faith never apprehended. Thus **his faith itself,** the mere fact of implicit trust in God, was counted to **him** for righteousness. But though **the same righteousness** is imputed to us who believe, and by means of faith also, it is no longer the mere fact of believing implicitly in God's truth, but the reception of **Christ Jesus the Lord** by faith, which justifies us (see vs. 23-25). As it was then the realization of God's

words by faith, so now; but we have **the Person of the Lord Jesus for the object of faith,** explicitly revealed; **he had not.** In both cases justification is **gratuitous** and is **by faith;** and so far, which is as far as the argument here requires, the parallel is strict and complete" *("The New Testament for English Readers").*

4. **"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt"** (4). "Now a worker has his wage counted to him as a due, not as a favour" *(Moffatt's translation).* "It is no favour to a man to pay him what he is earning. It is a 'debt' due him" *(Stifler).* Dr. Shedd quotes Coriolanus here:

> "Better it is to die, better to starve,
> Than crave the hire which first we do deserve."

5. **"But to him that worketh not, but believeth,.....his faith is reckoned for righteousness"** (5). Here is a most explicit statement of justification by grace through faith. Justification is offered not to the worker but to the believer. Works indeed have their place in the believer's life—he is "created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**" (Eph. 2: 10), but his salvation is not a reward for works: it is the gift of God through faith.

6. **"Even as David also"** (6-8). This quotation from the 32d Psalm is offered in further proof of the proposition of the chapter, namely, that gospel-righteousness is in keeping with the Old Testament. David was an Old Testament

saint, and his justification was by faith. He "describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works," saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin" *(1911 Bible)*. Blessed, indeed! Wonderful salvation!

7. **"Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only?"** (9-12). Justification in the Old Testament, as in the New, is independent of ordinances. It was not a reward of circumcision, for Abraham was justified twenty-five years before he was circumcised. Thus he is "the father of all them that believe," whether from among the Jews or from among the Gentiles. "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9).

8. **"For the promise.....was not..... through the law"** (13-22). This justification, in the Old Testament, as in the New, is independent of the law of Sinai. Abraham never had the law, and without it he was justified. He was saved by promise, and the law which came 430 years afterward did not make void the older Covenant of Promise. The law was added to the promise only until the Seed to Whom the promise was made should come. He having come, the law—which was a schoolmaster to bring unto Him—is done away (2 Cor. 3; Gal. 3:19-29). "The promise.....was not..... through the law, but through the righteousness

of faith" (Rom. 4:13). There can be no mingling of the two covenants, for their fundamental principles are in sharpest contrast. "The law worketh wrath," and not salvation (v. 15). "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace" (16). On no other basis could grace have manifested itself. Let the principle of works enter in, and grace is excluded. Abraham was given a promise which was opposed to nature. But because the Promiser was God, he considered neither his own dead body, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise through unbelief; he believed God; "and **therefore"—therefore; because he believed God**—"it was reckoned to him for righteousness" (*22, 1911 Bible).*

9. **"Now it was not written for his sake alone,.....but for us also"** (23-25). Not "for his sake alone," but "for us also." The Old Testament and the New Testament are in perfect concord. To the Old Testament saint, faith was reckoned for righteousness; and not only to him, but to "us also, to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered up for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (24, 25). "Why was this 25th verse added?" asks Dr. Stifler. "Why did the story not close with the 24th? To show that the faith that saves is not faith in the act of the resurrection, but in its import. He who is justified

must believe not only that Jesus died and rose again, but why. He died 'for our offences.' This word 'offences' brings to view again the whole somber picture of the first main division of the epistle, the division about sin. Sin was such that nothing but the blood of Jesus our Lord could atone for it. But His death does atone, and therefore no works of law find any place in justification. And so it comes to pass that he who believes in the resurrection believes first of all that his own personal sins sent Jesus to the cross and the tomb, that He was the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. It is only painful conviction of sin that can believe in this way. But if faith stopped at the tomb it would be only an agony. It also sees that, while Jesus died for sins, that death was accepted as the ransom price (3:24), and so Jesus was raised again. He who became surety for the sinner's debt could not have been released from the prison-house of the tomb unless the debt was paid. His appearance from the tomb is an everlasting proof of the sufficiency of His atonement for our sins; and he who really believes in the resurrection believes that the guilt of his sins is cancelled. Faith is no longer an agony, but a joy, and the believer's heart is set, not merely on the historic (2 Cor. 5:16), but on the raised Christ. That He was delivered for our offences is pain: that He was raised again for our justification is pure spiritual delight."

III. Gospel-Righteousness Provides for the Believer's Eternal Security (ch. 5).

1. **"Therefore being justified by faith"** (1-11). The sevenfold result of justification is shown in this passage. By reason of the gospel-righteousness bestowed in response to faith, the believer has

(1) **"Peace with God"** (1). Christ Himself "is our peace" (Eph. 2:14). The American Revisers have changed the "we have" to "let us have." In favor of the former are the American portion of the Revision Committee, also H. A. W. Meyer, Godet and others. Meyer says the imperative is "utterly unsuitable" to the sense. On this Dr. Stifler says, "The question turns on the length of a single vowel, and the manuscripts are not trustworthy on this point; they frequently confound the long and short o. The logic must decide. 'Peace' does not mean primarily tranquility of mind, but that state of things ensuing from a cessation of hostilities, freedom from strife (3:17; Ac. 12:20). This peaceful state came 'through our Lord Jesus Christ,' Who averted the wrath of God. It is possible by not noting this meaning of the word 'peace' that the mode of the verb was changed. For justification gives peace in this sense even when there may be no settled tranquility of the heart" (compare Phil. 4:7-9).

(2) **"Access by faith into this grace wherein we stand"** (2). Access means "a way in." Man,

apart from Christ, is shut out from God's presence and has no way of approach unto Him. But gospel-righteousness gives him an open door, even Him who said, "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (Jno. 10:9). By Him we have access by faith. A standing in grace is now conferred upon the believer. The gospel has been preached unto him, which also he has received, and wherein he **stands** (1 Cor. 15:1). His standing before God is the standing of Christ Himself. He is "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). It is all of grace, and having become a son, the believer is exhorted to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:1). All this is his through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, knowing no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made **the righteousness of God** in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). This is gospel-righteousness.

(3) **"And rejoice in hope of the glory of God"** (2). "What was said above," says Dr. Stifler, "on the reading 'let us have' is equally true here on the wrong reading 'let us rejoice.' The King James Version is correct." Perhaps the exhortation is necessary, in order to call our attention to what is really ours as the result of justification. The unregenerate sinner has no joy in the prospective glory of God; but to the believer it is given to "rejoice in hope" of that glory. Christ "having made peace" for him "through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20),

thus opened for him "a way in" to God's presence and fellowship, and establishing his standing before God, the believer looks forward with rejoicing to the time when the whole earth shall be full of God's glory.

(4) **"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also"** (3). For "we glory" read "we rejoice," as in verse 2. Not only do we rejoice in the coming glory, but also the sufferings attending us on the way. The reason for this is given. The Christian may exult even in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience (i. e., endurance); and patience (or endurance) worketh experience; and experience, hope (3, 4). And as for this hope, it is a hope that maketh not ashamed, a hope that can never bring disappointment, a hope that is sure of fruition. The reason for this is shown in the next clause of the passage.

(5) **"Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts"** (5). The love of God here spoken of is not our love for God, nor God's love for us, but just God's own love as it pours forth from His great loving heart. Let it not be forgotten that this indwelling love is a proof that the believer's hope will never shame him. He may boldly confess his hope because he has God's love in his heart. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.....Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us:

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.....Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him" (1 Jno. 3:14-19).

(6) **"The Holy Spirit.....is given unto us"** (5). He not only puts God's love into our hearts, but He Himself dwells in us (Rom. 8:9). Love is the Spirit's fruit (Gal. 5:22), borne in us by His own presence. We know that He liveth in us, because of the presence within us of God's love. "If we love one another," that fact is the proof that "God dwelleth in us, and (thus) His love is perfected in us" (1 Jno. 4:12). "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Nothing is more clearly taught in the New Testament than that the Holy Spirit is given to each believer as an indwelling presence (1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9).

(7) **"We also joy in God"** (11). This is the capstone of the magnificent temple of the believer's inheritance resulting from gospel-righteousness. He is brought to the place of joy in God. Not merely in the blessings of God, but in God Himself. His soul crieth out after God, the living God, and only God can satisfy him. This joy in God is "through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received the reconciliation." "Atonement" is wrong here. The word used is the same as the one occurring twice in verse 10. The reconciliation we have received is the changed relation between God and us.

The argument for the believer's security in Christ reaches its climax here, ending where it began. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" that is to say, "We joy in God," and this on account of the reconciliation which has been accomplished by the gospel.

The steps leading up to this climax are in verses 6 to 10, which contain a threefold antithesis arguing the proposition that the saved are eternally safe. It sets forth that this is true because (1) God, on account of His great love for His **enemies,** gave His Son to die for them; "much more then," shall these enemies, now **justified,** be kept safe, through Christ, from the wrath to come (compare vs. 8, 9 with 1 Thes. 1:9, 10); it is true furthermore (2) because, having reconciled us to Himself when we were His enemies, He surely will preserve us who have become His **friends** (compare verse 10 with Col. 1:21, 22); and it is true (3) because Christ, Who **died** to **save** us, now **lives** to **keep us saved** (compare verse 10 with Heb. 7:25; 1 Pet. 1:5).

We cannot doubt God's love toward us, for Christ died for us while we were "without strength" and "ungodly" (v. 6). Someone might be found to die for a **good** man, but Christ died for sinners, and this is another proof of God's love for us (vs. 7, 8). It follows, then, that being **justified** by His blood, we shall be **kept safe** in Christ from the wrath to come (v. 9). Since by Christ's **death** we who were **enemies** were reconciled to God, much more shall we, by Christ's

life at God's right hand, be **kept safe.** Because He lives we shall live also (v. 10).

In a word the believer has been brought into a new state of reconciliation, and it is made evident that God will keep him in this state. Therefore he rejoices in God.

> "To God I'm reconciled;
> His pardoning voice I hear;
> He owns me for His child;
> I can no longer fear.
> With confidence I now draw nigh,
> And 'Father, Abba, Father,' cry."

2. **"Through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received the reconciliation"** (11, *R. V.*). "It has not been sufficiently noted by expositors," said Dr. Stifler, "that the word 'received' (v. 11) is not active, but passive, equivalent to 'made recipients of.' The argument for the 'assurance of salvation secured for the present and the future' *(H. A. W. Meyer)* is conducted wholly from the divine side. If it is objected that, after all, faith is a necessary condition of salvation, and if it fails, all fails, why this very point is secured by the whole argument. If when we were hateful to God He changed toward us, will He—now that we have been made recipients in His grace of that saving change—will He now not insure the condition of its perpetuity? Will God care for everything concerning the believer, support him in trials, shield him in temptation, shed His love abroad in his heart,

but leave him to himself in the vital point, his faith? The reconciled man's faith is the first and the chief object of the divine care. The single aim of the argument is the performance of **justification by faith."**

3. **"Wherefore"** (12-21). The all-inclusive aspect of Christ's redemptive work on the cross is set forth in this passage. Adam and Christ are brought into contrast to show the effect of Adam's sin on the one hand and Christ's atoning death on the other.

Verses 13 to 17 being parenthetical, verses 12 and 18 should be read together. The "Wherefore" introducing verse 12 is literally "On this account." This links the new paragraph beginning here with the one preceding it, and shows that the topic is unchanged. Verses 12 and 18 may be read,

"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned; so then, as through one trespass it (the trespass) came to all men unto condemnation; so also through one righteous act it (the righteous act) came to all men unto justification of life" *(Improved Version).*

The argument here—and the argument is elaborated in the intervening parenthetical passage, as we shall see—is that when Adam sinned all mankind sinned in him. This is proved from the fact that physical death was the common lot of all men from Adam to Moses. Irresponsible persons, including infants and the insane, died as

well as others; and as these could not have died as the result of any sins of their own, and as death is the result of sin, it is argued that their death was the outgrowth of their sin when they were yet in Adam's loins. A similar argument is found in Heb. 7:9, 10, where it is declared that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham, "for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him."

Before he had begotten a single child, Adam fell into sin, and, as a result, his nature became sinful and corrupt and death-dealing. And his offspring, which of course includes the whole human family, has inherited from him the poison of his fallen nature and the seeds of death. It is on this account that man dies. It is not a man's own sinful acts in his own person that cause his death. He dies because he has inherited a dying nature, and he has inherited a dying nature because he sinned in his father Adam.

This is unfolded in the parenthetical verses, 13 to 17. Sin was in the world before the law was issued on Sinai, but, in the absence of law, sin is not charged against men. Nevertheless men died —"death reigned from Adam to Moses." Now, why did they die, if death is the penalty for our sinful acts? There was no law to transgress, and yet death reigned "even over them that had not sinned after the similitude (or likeness) of Adam's transgression." Adam transgressed a law when he sinned: God had said that of the

tree of the knowledge of good and evil he must not eat, and that if he ate of it, he should die. When he ate, he transgressed this law and incurred its penalty, therefore he died; on the day that he ate of it he died spiritually, being cut off for the time being from the life of God; and in due time he died physically, and this because he had transgressed the law of God. His descendants lived and multiplied through the centuries from Adam to Moses; and, although they were not under law, they died. This shows that they died because they all had sinned against law in the act of Adam while they were yet in his loins, "who is a figure of Him that was to come."

This little word—"Him that was to come"—points to the antidote provided of God for the awful and deadly poison of sin, and the fact that the antidote is ready and abundant and efficacious delivers God from the suspicion of arbitrary and unjust dealing with men. In the first place, their sinful condition was not due to any divine fiat; it was rather the result of wilful disobedience on man's part. And in the second place, God has done what he needed not to do in providing the remedy. He has done it, not to discharge an obligation, but for "the great love wherewith he loved us."

The language in verses 15 to 17 is very much involved, and the translators are in confusion about it. As given in the King James Version, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift .....and not as it was by one that sinned, so is

the gift," etc., it is awkward and hard to be understood. The revisers only change the word "offence" to "trespass" and do not help much. Mr. Darby suggests a way out of the difficulty by reading, "But shall not the act of favour be as the offence?.....and shall not as by one that sinned be the gift?" But even he gives the common reading in a foot-note, showing that he is uncertain about the matter.

Conybeare and Howson render it:

"But far greater is the gift than was the transgression; for if by the sin of one man (Adam), death passed upon the many, much more in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ has the freeness of God's bounty overflowed unto the many. Moreover the boon (of God) exceeds the fruit of Adam's sin; for the doom came, out of one offence, a sentence of condemnation; but the gift comes, out of many offences, a sentence of acquittal. For if the reign of death was established by the one man (Adam), through the sin of him alone; far more shall the reign of life be established, in those who receive the overflowing fulness of the free gift of righteousness, by the one man Jesus Christ."

Moffatt's *"Historical New Testament"* reads:

"But very different is the free gift from the trespass. For since the many died by the one man's trespass, much more did the grace of God and that free gift which is by the grace of the man Jesus Christ abound to the many. And the free gift is not occasioned as by one that sinned. For while the judgment passed from one into condemnation, the free gift passed from many trespasses into justification."

Dr. Weymouth translates:

"But God's free gift immeasurably outweighs the transgression (or, false step). For if through the transgression of the one individual the mass of mankind have died, infinitely greater is the generosity with which God's grace, and the gift given in His grace which found expression in the one man Jesus Christ, have been bestowed on the mass of mankind. And it is not with the gift as it was with the results of one individual's sin; for the judgment which one individual provoked resulted in condemnation, whereas the free gift after a multitude of transgressions results in acquittal. For if, through the transgression of the one individual, death made use of the one individual to seize the sovereignty, all the more shall those who receive God's overflowing grace and gift of righteousness reign as kings in life through the one individual, Jesus Christ."

The parenthesis ends with verse 17. The American Revision should be consulted in the study of the final verses of the chapter, for the Revisers have preserved to us the definite article used in the Greek throughout the passage. Thus we read:

"So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This passage clearly teaches that over against the fact that men are "by nature children of wrath" God has set the other fact that by His grace the Lord Jesus on the cross "tasted death for every man." If in Adam's sin, "the many were constituted sinners," it is also true that in Christ's death, "the many were constituted righteous."

The reason for the law is given in verse 20. It "entered, that the offence might abound." As Gal. 3:19 puts it, "It was added (to the Abrahamic covenant) because (literally, for the sake) of transgressions"; and it was given only temporarily, "till the Seed (i. e., Christ) should come, to Whom the promise was made." In other words, the law was given to magnify the sinfulness of sin, "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13). But even for this condition, God's remedy was at hand.

"Where sin increased, grace has overflowed; in order that as sin has exercised kingly sway in inflicting death, so grace, too, may exercise kingly sway in bestowing a righteousness which results in the Life of the Ages through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vs. 20, 21, *Weymouth*).

We conclude our study by quoting a paraphrase of this passage from the pen of Professor George Barker Stevens:

"In view of the truths which have been established, we may compare Christ, His work, and its result, salvation, with Adam, his fatal transgression, and its con-

sequence, physical death, which became the portion of all because his sin involved as its result the sinning of all his descendants. I affirm this relation between sin and death on the ground that even before the law came in to condemn sin and to stamp it as transgression, all were falling a prey to death; even those who lived during this period and had, unlike Adam, no explicit, positive command which they could break, continued to die. (But, before carrying out the comparison between Adam and his work, and Christ and His work, note certain **differences.** The grace of God in Christ is more than a match for the sin which began with Adam and spread itself over all mankind. Man's condemnation issued from **one** trespass, but God's restoring grace has more power than **many** trespasses even, since it saves man from the power of many. We may be sure of this because it is more easily conceivable and more certain that those who receive God's gift in Christ will triumph over sin than that all should have become involved in death in consequence of Adam's trespass). So then—as we began to say—as by Adam's sin all became involved in death, by Christ's work of righteous obedience is acceptance with God opened to all, for the two cases are parallel. Christ is the second Adam, come to restore to God's favor those who as descendants of the first Adam, are lost to it. Now the Old Testament system, whose saving function I deny, had just the purpose to bring out this indwelling sin into its greatest strength, so that the case of man was rendered even more hopeless than before; but the grace of God in Christ is able to overcome even this power of sin when thus intensified by the law and to bring man back to divine favour and assure him of eternal bliss."

IV. Gospel-Righteousness Does Not Produce a Sinful Life (ch. 6).

The sixth chapter brings up and answers a question which naturally grows out of the fifth.

In the fifth chapter, the eternal security of the believer is dealt with, and it is there shown that a saved man is **safe.** The argument of the chapter is summed up in the statement with which it closes: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

The question now very naturally presents itself: will not this teaching as to gospel-righteousness encourage and promote a life of sin? If a man is assured that since he is born again he is beyond all possibility of condemnation and cannot fail of final salvation, will this not result in careless living? The answer is that in his new birth the believer has come into possession of a new nature, which is "created in righteousness and true holiness," and that therefore he has new desires; and not only new desires, but new power to live according to those desires. The matter is beautifully worked out in the chapter before us.

1. **"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?** (1). Grace abounding is a thing greatly to be desired. If it is produced by abounding sin, must we not then conclude that we are to persist in sin, in order that it may result in more and more grace? The answer to the question raised in verse 1 extends to the 14th verse.

(1) **"God forbid!"** (2). This is the language

of every Christian heart. The name of God does not really occur in the Greek text here, which would be more literally rendered, "Far be it!" But, as Dean Alford suggests, after following the King James Version,

> "**God forbid** is the only adequate rendering of the expression in the original, **Let it not be:** for it implies a reference to an averting Power; and the occasion is solemn enough to justify, in our language, the mention of that Power. The phrase is used of some inference in itself abhorrent from reverence or piety, or precluded by some acknowledged fact inconsistent therewith. The latter is here the ground of rejection. An **acknowledged fact** in the Christian life follows, which precludes our persisting in our sin."

(2) **"We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?"** (2, *R. V.*). This is the force of this verse, literally translated. It is not that we "are dead," for we are not dead. We **died,** but we have risen from the dead. Both of these great and wonderful facts—our death and our resurrection—are dealt with in this paragraph.

(3) **"Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"** (3, *R. V.*). To understand this reference, we must go to 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13, where we learn that all who are born again—and **when** they are born again—are made members of the body of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." The same subject is discussed also in

Gal. 3:26-28: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus" *(R. V.)*. Now, here, in Rom. 6:3, we are taught not only that we have been baptized into Christ, but that through this baptism into Him we have been "baptized into His death." The death referred to is of Christ's death on the cross of Calvary. Our baptism into His death took place when we, having believed, were born again and joined to Him by the Holy Spirit. We were then made "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30), and from that time we have been reckoned as partakers in whatever the Lord Jesus Christ ever did for us. He died for us, and according to God's reckoning, we died in that death. He was also buried for us, and He rose again for us, and our baptism into Him includes all these things. We were baptized into His burial and into His resurrection. But the great fact which must first be grasped and apprehended is the fact of our **death** in Him. For "we thus reckon, that if one died for all, then **all** died" (2 Cor. 5:14). Of course there is a sense in which all this was accomplished in the reckoning of God before we believed and even before we were born. In the sight of Him Who sees the end from the beginning, we were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the

world, and in God's book all Christ's members were written, when as yet there was none of them (Ps. 136:16); but viewed from our present human standpoint, we may say that this was actualized for us when we believed on Christ and were joined to Him, being baptized into Him by the Holy Spirit.

(4) **"Therefore"** (4). In this verse the symbol of water baptism is taken up, and its warrant pointed out. Because we have been joined to Christ by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, thus being "baptized into His death," therefore we submit ourselves to the rite of water baptism, in which are symbolized the death and burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus in our room and stead, and our death and burial and resurrection in Him. And in water baptism the believer not only looks backward to what has been done for him in Christ, and to what, in God's reckoning, he himself is accounted to have done in Christ, but he also looks forward to a "walk in newness of life." Baptism in water is indeed "a form," but it is also more than a form. When rightly entered into and intelligently apprehended, it signifies the believer's faith, not only in what God hath wrought for him in the person of His divine Substitute, but also in what God will do for him, and in him, and through him "in newness of life."

(5) **"For if we are become identified with Him in the likeness of His death, so also we shall be of His resurrection"** (5, *Darby*). "This verse tells why there may be a new walk in point-

ing out the power of that walk. The reason is that, as we are one with Him in His death, so are we also in His resurrection, being endowed in the latter with the same life which He received in rising from the tomb. The reference is not to our future bodily resurrection. 'For if (or "as") a graft in a tree (Jno. 15), we became (not "planted," but) grown together (with him) in the likeness of his death (viz: our baptism), so shall we be also still grown together (with Him) in the likeness of His resurrection (viz: our emergence from the watery grave).' To state this idea of union Paul has not abandoned his figure of baptism. Grafting, to be sure, is not done in water, but the union in baptism is as vital as that between the graft and the tree. It must be noted that none can share in Christ's resurrection life except by first dying. We are buried in order to be raised (Jno. 12:24). Now for the first time Paul has clearly asserted union with Christ. For the thought is, if we went into the baptism in union, why should we not come out in union? The oneness in the immersion is proof of the oneness in the emersion" *(Stifler).*

(6) **"Our old man was crucified with Him"** (6, *R. V.*). This definite assertion is repeated in Gal. 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ;" and the reason for this crucifixion is given in the verse before us, "that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin." The emphasis here is on the **"so."** Before our regeneration, we were in slav-

ery—"sold under sin." God's way of delivering us from this slavery was to cause us to pay the penalty, and this we did in the person of our Substitute; and so we are no longer in bondage to sin.

(7) **"For he that hath died is released from sin"** (7, *R. V. margin*). The believer is here pictured as the criminal who has paid the penalty for his crime. He was guilty, he was sentenced to death, he was executed, and now there is nothing against him, he is freed from sin. If he apprehends this, he may sing from a full heart:

> "I do believe, I now believe,
> That Jesus died for me;
> And through His blood, His precious blood,
> I am from sin set free."

(8) **"But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him"** (8-10, *R. V.*). The reason for this wonderful statement, based upon the "full assurance of faith," is given in verses 9 and 10. Christ Who died, has been raised from the dead, and dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him; and this being true for Him, it is also true for those who died in Him. For them, as well as for Him, the death that took place on Calvary accomplished the fullest vindication of the law, and answered all the demands of righteousness. It was "once for all" (see *R. V. margin;* compare Heb. 7:27). As to the life unto which we are raised, it is not a life unto sin, for sin has no claim upon it. It is to be

lived unto God (v. 10). "One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15, *R. V.*).

(9) **"Even so reckon ye also youselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus"** (11, *R. V.*). This is an exhortation to adopt for ourselves the reckoning of God. He reckons us to have died to sin: let us also reckon it. He reckons us to have been brought again from the dead and into a life which is to be **unto** Him. And there is more than reckoning here, for by His grace and power we have been born again, and are really and actually in possession of a new life; and this new life is "unto God," because it is God's own life. We have become "partakers of the divine nature." We are God's beloved children. Having heard the words of Jesus and believed Him that sent Him, we have eternal life and shall not come into judgment, but have passed out of death into life (Jno. 5:24).

(10) **"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey its desires"** (12, *1911 Bible*). Dr. Weymouth translates here:

"Let not sin therefore reign as king in your mortal bodies, causing you to be in subjection to their cravings; and no longer lend your faculties as unrighteous weapons for sin to use; on the contrary surrender your very selves to God as living men who have risen from the dead, and surrender your several faculties to God, to be used as weapons to maintain the right" (vs. 12, 13).

(11) **"For sin shall not be lord over you, since you are subjects not of law but of grace"** (14, *Weymouth*). Here is a statement which confuses the legalist, for he would put it exactly the other way about. He would say, "Sin shall have dominion over us unless we see ourselves to be under law and not under grace." He reasons that Christians are to be kept from sinning through the terror of the law; and thus he would make the law to be a ministration, not of condemnation and death, but of justification and life (compare 2 Cor. 3). The statement of Rom. 6: 14 can be apprehended only by the believer who sees that in Christ there is an absolute end of the law (Rom. 10: 4). "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin"—the thing that empowers sin to sting unto death—"is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 56, 57). This victory is brought about by the utter abolition of the law, "which is done away in Christ" (2 Cor. 3: 14). The gospel in its power and beauty can never be fully seen until this point is settled.

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.....The law is not of faith.....Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.....Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made.....But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,

that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3: 10-25).

"Free from the law, oh, happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and **there** is remission;
Curs'd by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

"Now we are free—there's no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
'Come unto **Me,**' or, hear His sweet call,
Come, and He saves us once for all.

" 'Children of God,' oh, glorious calling,
Surely His grace will keep us from falling;
Passing from death to life at His call,
Blessed salvation once for all!"

2. **"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?"** (15, *R. V.*). The argument of verses 1-14, is that the believer is not led into a sinful life by the consideration of his eternal security in Christ. Having received a new nature by regeneration, he is now actuated by new desires, and not only by desires, but by new **power.** It would be indeed pitiful if the new-born child of God, with his new **desires** toward God, should be left without **power** to accomplish these desires. God has not left him thus. Having died to sin, he is alive unto God, and God is working in him both to will His good pleasure and to do it (Phil. 2: 13). The concluding statement of the section is that sin has no dominion over the believer be-

cause he is freed from law, and is under grace. Sin cannot inflict its deadly sting, for "the strength of sin," which "is the law" (1 Cor. 15: 56), is "done away" (2 Cor. 3: 11-14). In the 7th chapter this freedom from law is taken up in detail.

But a new question confronts us here, growing naturally out of this statement of the believer's freedom from law: "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?" (15). The believer's response to this question is identical with the response of verse 2, "God forbid," and the remainder of the chapter is occupied with a fuller answer to the question raised.

(1) **"Do you not know that you are the slaves of him whom you obey, to whom you present youselves as obedient slaves, be it of sin for death or of obedience for uprightness? But, thank God, though you were slaves of sin you became cordially obedient to that type of teaching to which you were handed over. Freed from sin you became slaves to uprightness. (I am speaking from a human standpoint, owing to the weakness of your flesh)"** (vs. 16-19, *Moffatt's translation*). The apostle is here addressing himself to the question raised in the 15th verse. "This question," says Dr. Stifler, "was sure to arise, because human societies and governments know of no way to restrain sin but by law and its penalty. The state's ruler is 'the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil' (13: 4)

in breaking the law. The assertion 'ye are not under law' was made to turn the justified man's gaze from Moses to Christ, from law to grace. It is natural to suppose that God's method in the gospel would follow the method of human government, but the principle of fear is not strong enough to keep men in the path of duty. Union with Christ is God's method of giving man victory over sin. Says Mr. Grant:

"Everything here will be questioned, however, by the soul ignorant of itself and of God, and such questions, because of their importance, must have careful answer. Again, therefore, we have the objection of the mere moralist taken up to be indignantly set aside: 'What then? Are we to sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? Far be the thought.' Yet the heart of man is in fact capable of such abuse of divine goodness; yes, but what would such an argument mean? A soul set free willingly yielding itself to that from which God has delivered it? Is this deliverance when the heart is still deliberately seeking that from which it assumes to be delivered? Well, says the apostle, if I am addressing any in such a condition, let me remind them that here the whole nature of God is in question. Does not then the way of sin, deliberately pursued, end in death? Does the gospel change this relation of sin to death? Does it not manifest God, and in all His attributes? His holiness being more shown indeed in the agony of the cross, than even the uttermost punishment of the sinner could have shown it. Thus then, if one freely yields himself to obey a master, he cannot but be reckoned as belonging to the master he has chosen, whether on the one hand to sin with its terrible wages, or of obedience to God for righteousness. In all this there rules a fundamental necessity, which the gospel

could not subvert and be still a gospel" (*"Numerical Bible"*).

In verse 17 the apostle gives thanks concerning the Roman believers for their escape from the former bondage of sin. This escape had been by means of their obedience to that mold of teaching into which they had been delivered. The Revision is to be preferred here, as the King James Version reverses the figure. It does seem natural, as Stifler points out, to say a "form of doctrine which was delivered you." But that is not what Paul says here. "If it were, one shining point would be lost, that both they and God conjoined in the act of their salvation. They obeyed from the heart the type of teaching—the gospel—into whose power His grace delivered them."

The statement of verse 7 is repeated in verse 18, namely, that the believer is free from sin, and in the latter passage the reverse of the proposition is also set forth. In becoming free from sin the Christian has become the bondservant of righteousness, that is to say, he has, by the wondrous change wrought in him in regeneration, come into the place where righteousness becomes his master instead of sin. And this not through fear of law, but by the power of the indwelling Christ; "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16).

(2) **"I speak after the manner of men"** (19-22). The chapter closes with a practical ex-

hortation growing out of all this. The believer is pointed to the new life with its new possibilities. The paragraph is paraphrased thus by Dr. George Barker Stevens:

"I am applying to these high spiritual truths terms derived from human relations so as to make the contrast between the characteristic of the old life and that of the new plain to the most undiscerning. And I apply this truth thus: just as you used to allow your bodily powers to be dominated by sin, so you should now, as Christians, make them the means of serving and promoting holiness of life. For (to repeat my distinction between the two kinds of life) in your old life you were freemen in respect of righteousness, and bondmen in respect of sin; the opposite is now true; you are now free from sin and bound to righteousness. But looking away from the principle to the consequences of the old sinful life, what reward did it bring? Only a fruitage of which you are ashamed, for all its results are in the line of that final issue, moral death. But the opposite of all this is your case now. Being freemen in relation to sin and bondmen in relation to God, you have holiness and everlasting life as your portion."

(3) **"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (23, *R. V.*). Our eternal life is not only "through Jesus Christ our Lord," as in the King James Version. It is **in Christ Himself** and is never separated from Him. It is in us of course, but that is because we are in Him. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 Jno. 5: 11, 12).

This cannot be too strongly insisted upon. There is no such thing as eternal life apart from Christ. The gospel does not offer to man a life detached from Christ. In the gospel God has provided a place in Christ and a share in His life to all who come unto Him. The gospel finds man dead as "the wages of sin;" it brings him "out of death into life" (Jno. 5:24); and from the moment of his regeneration the believer has Christ in him as his life (Col. 3:4).

"Buried with Christ, and raised with Him too;
What is there left for me to do?
Simply to cease from struggling and strife,
Simply to 'walk in newness of life.'

"'Risen with Christ,' my glorious Head,
Holiness now the pathway I tread;
Beautiful thought, while walking therein:
'He that is dead is freed from sin.'

"Living with Christ, Who 'dieth no more,'
Following Christ, Who goeth before;
I am from bondage utterly freed,
Reckoning self as 'dead indeed.'

"Living for Christ, my members I yield,
Servants to God, for evermore sealed;
'Not under law,' I'm now 'under grace,'
Sin is dethroned, and Christ takes its place.

"Growing in Christ: no more shall be named
Things of which now I'm truly ashamed;
'Fruit unto holiness' will I bear,
Life evermore, the end I shall share."

V. The Law Cannot Produce a Holy Life (ch. 7).

We now come to the 7th chapter, in which it is set forth, that the law being powerless to justify, is equally unable to sanctify. In the first six chapters three wonderful statements concerning the law have been made, namely: (1) "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (3:20); (2) "The law entered, that the offence might abound" (5:20); (3) "Ye are not under the law" (6:14). These three propositions, as has been pointed out by others, furnish a working analysis of the 7th chapter, as follows: (1) The believer's freedom from law (vs. 1-6); (2) Though the law makes sin to abound, the law nevertheless is not sinful (vs. 7-13); (3) The law cannot deliver from the flesh (vs. 14-25). We will consider the chapter in the order thus indicated.

1. **"Ye also were made dead to the law"** (1-6). This statement of verse 4, as given by the Revision, is the core of the paragraph.

(1) **"The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth"** (1). The marriage relation is used as the basis of an illustration showing how and why the Christian is freed from law. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law)." The word for brethren here is *"adelphoi,"* and stands for the whole brotherhood in the Roman Church, and is not, as some writers have insisted, confined to the

Jewish believers in that brotherhood. It is true that only the Jews had been actually under the law of Sinai, for the Gentiles have not the law (Rom. 2: 14), yet the apostle here, by the Spirit, is proceeding to show the absence of the legalistic principle in God's dealings with His people in the gospel. They are not under law, but under grace, and these are two contrasting principles which cannot be yoked together. They pull in opposite directions. If a man is under law, he is not under grace; and if he is under grace, he is not under law. This proposition ought to be self-evident. The apostle writes further, "I speak to them that know law." He was addressing intelligent people who knew the working of law as a principle. They lived in Rome, where the very meaning of law, and of force through law, had been taught to the world. There is no definite article before the word "law" in the parenthetical passage of verse one. He is speaking for the moment of law as a principle, rather than **the** law of Sinai; howbeit, he has in view all the time throughout the illustration the freedom of the believer from the thunderings of Sinai.

(2) **"The woman which hath an husband"** (2). Here the case is brought before us of a married woman "bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." This is simple enough. The marriage relation continues of force between the two parties entering into it so long as they both shall live.

(3) **"But if her husband be dead, she is free"** (3). This also is perfectly clear. A married woman, if she marries another man than her husband, is guilty of bigamy: "she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

(4) **"Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ"** (4). Much confusion is found just here among the commentators. It is objected that Paul is mixed in his metaphor, since, in the illustration, it is the husband that dies, whereas, in the application, it is the wife who is "become dead." But the matter is clear enough when it is kept in mind precisely what the apostle writes. He does not say merely "ye are dead," but "ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ" *(R. V.)*. A wife, by her husband's death, has ceased to be a wife. Before the event of his death, there was a wife; after that event, the wife is no more. The woman remains, but she has become dead to the law which bound her to her husband, and her death to that law has been brought about by the death of her husband. It is not the metaphor of the apostle that is mixed, but the commentators.

(5) **"That ye should be married to another"** (4). Let the reader be very careful at this point. It at first seems strange that we should read here in the same sentence of "the body of Christ," and "another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead." For was it not the same Christ that

died Who was raised from the dead? How, then, can He be called "another?" Second Cor. 5 will help us here. In verses 14 to 16 of that chapter it is written: "One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for their sakes died and rose again. Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: **even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more."** By this statement we learn: (1) That, in the reckoning of God, when Christ died on the cross, the believer died with Him. So, here in Romans, the wife, as a wife, died in her husband's death; (2) that, when Jesus arose from the dead, we rose from the dead with Him, that henceforth we should live not unto ourselves, but unto Him in Whom we died and rose again; and (3) that the Christ we now know is not the Christ according to the flesh. Of course there is a sense in which He is the same Jesus as before the cross, but, in the gospel sense, He is far different. Our trust centers not in the Christ of Galilee, but in the Christ of glory; not in the Man Jesus, Who walked about doing good in the land of Palestine nineteen centuries ago, but in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who sits today at the right hand of the Majesty on high making intercession for us—"managing our concerns for us" (Heb. 7:25, *Wakefield's translation*). This point needs to be emphasized in this day. The subtle appeal found everywhere that

we should go "back to Christ," rejecting the teaching of the epistles and looking for our instruction to His kingdom teachings found in the synoptic gospels, is nothing short of an invention of the adversary. The epistles of the New Testament are the teachings of Christ as truly as His own words quoted in the gospels. And they are the teachings of the risen Christ, the glorified Christ, the present Christ, the Man Christ Jesus, the Man with Whom we have to do, the Man to Whom we are now married.

(6) **"That we should bring forth fruit unto God"** (4). In our natural condition, being "children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3), and joined, or married, to sin, our fruit, the issue of that marriage, the offspring of that relation, was such as to make us ashamed. But now, being made free from sin and having become servants to God, we have our fruit unto holiness (6:22). The purpose of the marriage relation is that children may be born and reared; they are the logical issue of this relationship. Just so, as in our former marriage to sin, the issue was uncleanness and iniquity (6:19), it is the purpose of our new marriage, being joined in this holy relation to the risen Christ, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. This is all brought out in the 5th and 6th verses of our chapter: "For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions (Gr. passions of sins), which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law,

having died to that wherein we were held" (the King James rendering, "that being dead wherein we were held," is incorrect).

(7) **"So that we serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter"** (6, *R. V.*). The Revised Version is to be preferred here above the King James. It is not merely that we have been delivered from the bondage of sin in order "that we should serve in newness of spirit," but "so that we serve in newness of **the Spirit.**" The contrast between "Spirit" and "letter" here is the same as in 2 Cor. 3, where the Spirit means the Holy Spirit, Who is living and working in and through the Christian; while the letter means the law of Sinai, the old covenant—a covenant of letters written and engraven in stones. To this Dean Alford agrees, who says, that the Spirit here refers to the Holy Spirit of God, Who originates and penetrates the Christian life; and that the letter signifies the law, being only a collection of precepts and prohibitions, while the gospel is a service of freedom, ruled by the Spirit, Whose presence is liberty. "The qualitatively expressed *pneumatos,* meaning in concrete application the **Holy** Spirit as the efficient principle of the Christian life, and the qualitative *grammatos,* characterizing the law according to its nature and character as non-living and drawn up in letters, are the specifically heterogeneous factors on which the two contrasted states are dependent" *(H. A. W. Meyer).* "The newness is the new spiritual state, or union with Christ;

the oldness of the letter was their former state under the law. The letter means the law. This new service produced holy fruit; the service under law brought forth fruit for death" *(Stifler)*. "Being married to a new husband we must change our way; still we must serve, but it is a service that is perfect freedom, whereas the service of sin was a perfect drudgery.....There must be a renovation of our spirit wrought by the Spirit of God, and in that we must serve. .....We are under the dispensation of the Spirit, and therefore must be spiritual, and serve in the Spirit.....It becomes us to worship in the veil and no longer in the outer court" *(Matthew Henry)*.

"Awaked by Sinai's awful sound,
My soul in bonds of guilt I found,
And knew not where to go;
Eternal truth did loud proclaim,
'The sinner must be born again,
Or sink in endless woe.'

"Amazed I stood, but could not tell
Which way to shun the gates of hell,
For death and hell drew near;
I strove, indeed, but strove in vain:
'The sinner must be born again'
Still sounded in my ear.

"When to the law I trembling fled,
It poured its curses on my head;
I no relief could find.
This fearful truth increased my pain:
'The sinner must be born again'
O'erwhelmed my tortured mind.

"I heard the law its thunders roll,
While guilt lay heavy on my soul—
A vast oppressive load;
All creature-aid I saw was vain;
'The sinner must be born again,'
Or drink the wrath of God.

"But while I thus in anguish lay,
The bleeding Saviour passed that way,
My bondage to remove.
The sinner, once by justice slain,
Now by his grace is born again,
And sings redeeming love."

2. **"The law is holy"** (7-13). In this second paragraph of the chapter it is shown that, though the law makes sin to abound, the law nevertheless is not sinful.

(1) **"What shall we say then? Is the law sin** (or **sinful**)**?"** (7). This question naturally arises out of what has gone before.

(2) **"God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law"** (7). That the law is not sinful is proved by the very fact that "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). A sinful law would be incapable of revealing the sinfulness of sin. It is because the law is perfect as a standard of righteousness that it so clearly manifests the presence of evil, and by this heavenly standard, every man is convicted of sin. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22, 23).

(3) **"For I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet"** (7).

The Revision is right here in adhering to uniformity in the translation of this Greek word, rendered, in the King James Version, lust, covet, concupiscence, etc.

(4) **"But sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting"** (8). Without the commandment, sin, though present in the heart of Saul of Tarsus, was unsuspected even by himself. His conscience was not aroused, he was not troubled—"for without the law sin was dead."

(5) **"For I was alive without the law once"** (9). Conybeare and Howson render here: "I felt that I was alive before, when I knew no law." And MacKnight paraphrases as follows: "Accordingly I was in my own imagination entitled to life while without the knowledge of law formerly." There is a similar use of the word "life" in 1 Thes. 3:8, "For now we **live,** if ye stand fast in the Lord." The apostle's meaning very evidently is, that he feels himself to live on account of the gratifying steadfastness and growth in grace of his beloved fellow-saints whom he had led into the knowledge of Christ.

(6) **"But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died"** (9). What does Paul mean here by the expression, "When the commandment came?" He was brought up on the commandments, doubtless, at his mother's knee, and the commandments were studied assiduously at the feet of Gamaliel; but there came a day when his eyes were opened, and he was given to see what

the commandments really meant, and that, far from being a means of grace and salvation, they were the means of death and condemnation. Sin was there all the time, but, until the day that the commandment came with all its crushing force upon his consciousness, sin gave him no disquietude. The strength of sin to sting him to death was the law, and when the law was joined to sin in his consciousness, sin, which until then had been dead, came to life, and he died (compare 1 Cor. 15:56, 57; 2 Cor. 3:7-9).

(7) **"And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death"** (10). "Ordained" is a supplied word, and is really not in place, for, as a matter of fact, the commandment was not ordained to life. The law is not a ministration of life, but of death (2 Cor. 3:7). And yet Paul could write of the commandment as being "unto life" because Moses has said, "He that doeth these things shall live by them" (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5). Saul of Tarsus, like every other sinner, found himself without power **to do these things,** and so the law, which was unto life, he found to be unto death. As Conybeare and Howson render it: "I felt that I was alive before, when I knew no law; but when the commandment came, sin rose to life, and I sank into death; and the very commandment whose end is life, was found to me the cause of death; for my sin, when it had gained a vantage ground by the commandment, deceived me to my fall, and slew me by the sentence of the law."

(8) **"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good"** (12). This conclusion grows out of the statement of the 11th verse. The holiness and justice and goodness of the law is proved by the fact that it slays every sinner with whom it comes in contact. This it must do, else it would be neither holy nor just nor good. The law of Sinai has been described by some one as "the concept of the mind of God as to what a man ought to be," and it has its penalty: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." So then, if a soul under law sins and dies not, that is indubitable proof that the law is unholy and unjust and evil. A holy law must of necessity impose and enforce its penalty. This explains the connection between verses 11 and 12: "For sin seized the advantage, and by means of the commandment it completely deceived me, and also put me to death. **So that** the law itself is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good" *(Weymouth)*.

(9) **"Was then that which is good made death unto me?"** (13). Rather, "Did then that which is good become death unto me?" *(R. V.)*. This question logically grows out of what has gone before it. Is it then possible that the law, being holy and just and good, could become death to a man?

(10) **"God forbid"** (13). In the last analysis, it was not the law that put Saul to death, but **sin,** by means of the law. What an awful thing sin is, that by the holy and just law of God it can bring

death to God's creatures! Surely, by this means, sin does in reality "appear sin, working death in me **by that which is good**; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." "Far be that from me. But I say that sin wrought this; that so it might be made manifest as sin, in working death to me through the knowledge of good; that sin might become beyond measure sinful, by the commandment" *(Conybeare and Howson)*. "The misuse and perversion of good is one of the tests whereby the energy of evil is detected, so that sin by its perversion of the good commandment into a cause of death was shown in its real character as sin" *(Dean Alford)*. Says Dr. Stifler:

"This assertion about the goodness or beneficence of the law starts an acute objection: 'Was then that which is good made death unto me?' Can wholesome bread prove poison to the hungry man who eats it? Does fresh, pure water start a fever instead of allaying thirst? How can that which is admitted to be 'good,' the law, prove to be 'death to me?' This subtle objection is not only answered, but turned into an argument. It was not the law that brought death, 'but sin.' And sin wrought death, 'that (in the purpose of God in giving the law) it might appear sin (inasmuch as it, sin, worked death in me by that which is *good*).' How desperate the disease that only grows worse under the appropriate remedy to heal it! But God had an additional purpose in giving the holy law to sinful man, viz: 'that (in order that) sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.' The coward is not known until he hears the command to march against the foe."

3. **"But I see another law,.....bringing me into captivity"** (14-25). This wail of the 23d verse is the burden of the closing paragraph of the chapter, which is a demonstration of the proposition that the law of Judaism could not deliver from the flesh.

(1) **"The law is spiritual: but I am carnal"** (14). The apostle has been thinking of himself, up to this point in the chapter, as in the days before he was born again, but the struggle he now proceeds to describe is not that of an unregenerate man trying to save himself, but rather of a regenerate man trying to be good. It is the conflict between the old nature and the new, subsisting together in the believer. The new nature cannot sin, while the old nature can do nothing else. The newly regenerate man, before he learns the better way, is apt to seek victory over the old nature by means of his own efforts. The result of such efforts is always failure, and it takes much bitter experience to teach the believer how helpless he is. It is natural for the human heart to put itself under law, and to seek to perfect itself by means of law-works. By this closing paragraph of chapter 7, we are to learn that, as the law was unable to justify the sinner and make him a child of God, so it is equally unable to sanctify the saint as to his walk. The way of victory is indicated in the 8th chapter.

(2) **"Sold under sin"** (14). This expression describes the condition of the carnal man. He is a slave sold into the captivity of sin. And let

us remember that the carnal man here is not an unsaved man. He has been saved from the **penalty** of sin, but he has not yet learned the way of deliverance from the **power** of sin. He still looks to the law for liberty, whereas the law can bring him only bondage. He is still a sinful man, though saved, and being a sinful man and putting himself under law, there can be but one result, he at once finds himself in a condition of slavery. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3: 10). It is not enough to approximate the law, and to do the best you can to keep it. Whoever fails, even in one point, is guilty of all (Jas. 2: 10). It follows, then, that as none of us has reached perfection and as the law tolerates no imperfection, therefore every one who puts himself under the law thereby brings upon himself the curse of the law. It is often said that, while we are free from the law as a means of life, we are under it as a rule of life; but there is no Scripture for this; indeed, there is much of Scripture against it. The Christian is promised that sin shall not have dominion over him just because he is not under law, but under grace (Rom. 6: 14). The very moment he is put under the law sin does have dominion over him, and he soon discovers that the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, for, while the law is holy, he is carnal, sold under sin.

(3) **"For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I"** (15). The two I's here, contending with each other, represent the old nature in Paul and the new. For convenience sake, we might say the struggle here is between Saul of Tarsus and Paul the apostle, abiding together in one body. The change in the tense from past to present in this section, beginning with verse 14, will be observed. "Hitherto," says Dean Alford, "the passage has been **historical**: now the apostle passes to the **present** time, keeping hold yet of the carnal self of former days, whose remnants are still energizing in the renewed man."

(4) **"I consent unto the law that it is good"** (16). This is shown, as the apostle points out, by the fact that he does not himself approve of the evil things he is doing.

(5) **"It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me"** (17). "His failure to lead a good life cannot be ascribed to his wrong attitude toward the law; that failure must be ascribed to indwelling sin. The 'I' is just himself, body, soul, and spirit, that have been seized upon by the alien master which he calls sin" *(Stifler)*.

(6) **"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing"** (18). This is shown from the fact, that while he is able to will that which is good, he is powerless to perform it. The argument grows pathetic, and he again reaches the same conclusion in verse 20 as in

verse 17: "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

(7) **"I find then a law"** (21). By this he refers to a principle he has discovered in his life, namely, that when he would do good, evil is present with him. He delights in the law of God after the inward man, and this is a proof that he is a converted man and is relating his experience as such. But he sees another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to sin which is in his members (22, 23). Four laws are in view in this passage: (1) the law of God; (2) the law of Paul's mind, consenting to the law of God; (3) the law of sin, or the tendency to evil in his own members; and (4) the law, or principle, that this law of sin is stronger in him than the law of his mind. It was a great discovery when he learned that he was utterly helpless in this unequal struggle, and cried out for deliverance.

(8) **"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"** (24). He is evidently crying out against his own physical body which is the instrument whereby he is led captive to the law of sin and death. He called it a body of sin in chapter 6:6, and now he calls it a body of death, for it is the seat of sin and death, and he had not yet discovered the way of deliverance from the power of sin and death.

(9) **"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"** (25). This is the ready answer to the

despairing question just preceding it, and is a proof that, when Paul is writing the words, he is looking back to a past experience through which he has come. Dean Alford says: "This exclamation and thanksgiving more than all convince me, that St. Paul speaks of **none other than himself,** and **carries out as far as possible** the misery of the conflict with sin in his members, **on purpose to bring in the glorious deliverance which follows.**—Compare 1 Cor. 15:56, 57, where a very similar thanksgiving occurs."

(10) **"So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin"** (25). This is a recapitulation of the whole paragraph. The deliverance out of the hopeless warfare indicated in that paragraph is brought into full light in the 8th chapter. The contrast between the victory life of chapter 8 and the life of defeat of chapter 7 is beautifully set forth by Leighton in a sermon on Rom. 8:35: "Is this he that so lately cried out, **O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?** that now triumphs? O happy man! **who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Yes, it is the same. Pained then with the thoughts of that miserable conjunction with the body of death, and so crying out who shall deliver, now he hath found a Deliverer to do that for him, to whom he is forever united. So vast a difference is there between a Christian taken **in himself** and **in** Christ!"

VI. Gospel-Righteousness Provides for a Holy Life by Means of the Holy Spirit Indwelling the Believer (ch. 8).

Spener, an old German commentator, once said that, "If Holy Scripture was a ring, and the epistle to the Romans its precious stone, chapter 8 would be the sparkling point of the jewel." Everybody agrees that this chapter is one of the loftiest mountain peaks in the whole realm of revealed truth. Here we find the climax of the argument begun at chapter 3:21 on the great subject of gospel-righteousness. This is the second main division of the epistle. That gospel-righteousness is by faith was shown in 3:21-31. That it is not contrary to the Old Testament Scriptures we saw in chapter 4. The 5th chapter teaches that by gospel-righteousness the believer is kept in eternal security. The 6th chapter shows that a sinful life is not produced nor encouraged by the gospel, but that, on the contrary, the believer, made eternally safe, has partaken of the divine nature and therefore of the divine hatred for sin. In the 7th chapter, the believer's sanctification by means of law is shown to be impossible, and now in our 8th chapter, we are to learn that through the indwelling Spirit of God the believer is led into a godly life. The chapter may be analyzed as follows: (1) The indwelling Holy Spirit as the Spirit of power (vs. 1-11); (2) The indwelling Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption (vs. 12-17); (3) The indwelling Holy

Spirit as the Spirit of hope (vs. 18-27); (4) The Christian's assurance (vs. 28-39).

1. **"The law of the Spirit of life.....hath made me free"** (1-11). It is a wonderful thing for the believer to discover the indwelling Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life and power. But first he must know his safety from wrath or condemnation:

(1) **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"** (1). The first verse stops with this wonderful statement, the remainder of the verse, as found in the King James Version, being, as all commentators agree, an unwarranted interpolation. The proposition squarely set forth, then, is that, the born again one is absolutely and for ever free from condemnation. This is what the gospel has done for him. It has bestowed upon him a righteousness that nothing can mar nor soil in the slightest degree; even the righteousness of God, that is God's own righteousness. This righteousness is imputed unto him at the beginning, and it does not vary afterward with his varying states and conditions, frames and feelings. It is his standing in Christ. This imputation is followed by the actual impartation of God's righteousness, but the process of impartation is gradual and continues to the end of earthly life, while imputation is not a process, but one definite act of God. Dr. Scofield's definition of imputation is: "(1) Imputation is the act of God whereby He accounts righteousness to the believer in Jesus Christ. (2)

Because of a believer's faith in Jesus, God will not impute sin against him." And the same writer defines justification as "the act of God whereby He declares righteous one who believes on Jesus Christ." "The connection by the word 'therefore,'" says Dr. Stifler, "is with the first clause of the preceding verse, and through it with that to which the clause refers. 'Now'—as the argument at present stands. The 'no' is emphatic —no condemnation from the law, and none on account of inherent sinfulness; none from any source nor for any cause. Those who make the 'now' temporal miss the shining point that 'no condemnation' means none possible, none forever. This happy condition belongs only to those in Christ Jesus. The rest of the verse is not genuine and is omitted by all modern editors of the text."

(2) **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death"** (2, *R. V.*). The preposition "of" is repeated in the original and by the Revisers. The statement is, that by the higher and more powerful law of the Spirit of life, the believer is made free from two other laws, namely, the law of **sin** and the law of **death.** The law of sin is defined in the preceding chapter (7:21-23). The believer, in the 7th chapter, seeking to live a righteous life by obedience to law, found another law in his members, that is, within himself, warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity under the law of sin in his

members. In the 8th chapter, deliverance has come, for he has discovered that the Holy Spirit is indwelling him, and that by the indwelling Spirit he may have victory over the law of sin which has heretofore dragged him down.

And not only so, but he is delivered also from the law of **death.** And the law of death is also defined in the 7th chapter, verses 7-11. The believer had not known sin except through the law, that is, the law of Sinai. He had not known coveting until he heard the law saying, "Thou shalt not covet." And sin, finding occasion, wrought in him, through the commandment, all manner of coveting. Apart from the law sin was dead, and apart from the law Saul of Tarsus had once considered himself alive, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died; and the commandment, which was unto life, he found to be unto death, for sin, finding occasion through the commandment, beguiled him and through it slew him. So the law of Moses, though in itself spiritual, holy, righteous and good, became unto him a law of **death.** It was indeed unto Israel a yoke which they were not able to bear (Ac. 15: 10). In our present chapter, the believer is seen as yielding himself to the indwelling Spirit of God, Who, by divine power, frees him from this law of death.

(3) **"For what the law could not do"** (3, 4). The law was unable to produce in man the obedience it demanded. It was weak through the flesh, for how could sinful flesh obey a holy law?

Therefore, what the law could not do, God did; and this He did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering. Men had all gone astray; they had turned each one to his own way, and the Lord caused to meet upon His devoted Son the iniquity of them all (Isa. 53: 6). And then came the condemnation. Sin in the flesh, all centering in the Lamb of God on the tree, was put to death, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in the believer. The believer is defined in the final clause of the fourth verse as one who walks not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. To walk according to the flesh, in the meaning of this passage, is to reject the gift of gospel-righteousness in Christ, and to seek to establish one's own righteousness by law-works. This is the natural thing and is what the flesh is ever prone to try. On the other hand, to walk according to the Spirit is to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed by the Spirit.

(4) **"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit"** (5). This section (vs. 5-8) draws a contrast between the unregenerate and the regenerate, and they are defined as those who are after the flesh and those who are after the Spirit. That this is the correct understanding is shown from the statement of the 9th verse, in which it is declared that the Christian is not in the flesh in the sense employed here. Rotherham's translation of the

passage reads: "For they who according to flesh have their being the things of the flesh do prefer, but they according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit; for what is preferred by the flesh is death, whereas what is preferred by the Spirit is life and peace;—inasmuch as what is preferred by the flesh is hostile towards God, for unto the law of God it doth not submit itself, neither in fact can it,—they moreover who in flesh have their being cannot please God." Dr. Moffatt renders the passage thus: "For those who follow the flesh have their interests in the flesh, and those who follow the Spirit have their interests in the Spirit. The interests of the flesh mean death, the interests of the Spirit mean life and peace. For the interests of the flesh are hostile to God; they do not yield to the law of God (indeed they cannot). Those who are in the flesh cannot satisfy God."

The emphatic statement at the close of the passage is of great importance. The words "so then," introducing the 8th verse, in the King James Version, are incorrect. It ought to read simply: "And they that are in the flesh cannot please God." The assertion is not a deduction from the preceding verses, but a solemn declaration of God's attitude toward those out of Christ. They are without faith, and "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6). God deals with men through Christ, and only through Christ. Whosoever will may come, but all who come must approach unto God through Him Who said,

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (Jno. 14:6). Coming through Him, all may come and welcome, but those who would climb up some other way are thieves and robbers (Jno. 10:1), and they must always fail of access to the Father. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:28-31).

Let it be understood, then, before we go forward in this chapter, that the flesh, the natural man, is under God's condemnation, the wrath of God abideth upon him. Apart from Christ is no salvation and no means of approach to God. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." There may be those in the flesh, as there are, and many of them, who can please men, and who are pleased with themselves, but God is not pleased with them; no matter what they do, and no matter how much their fellowmen may commend them for what they do, God is not pleased. How could He be pleased with men who tread under

foot His Son and repudiate the blood of the everlasting covenant?

(5) **"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you"** (9). In this section (vs. 9-11), four phrases are employed, all meaning the same thing and having reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer. They are: "the Spirit of God" (v. 9), "the Spirit of Christ" (v. 9), "Christ" (v. 10), and "the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead" (v. 11). The doctrine of the indwelling Spirit is found in 1 Cor. 6:19, 20: "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Which is in you, Which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" *(R. V.)*. The Holy Spirit does not enter the believer at some time subsequent to his regeneration, but the moment he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, he is indwelt by that Holy Spirit, who thereafter abides in him continually. And in the paragraph before us in our present study, we are assured that, if the Spirit of God is dwelling in us, we are not in the flesh, according to God's reckoning; and if, on the other hand, the Spirit of Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, is not indwelling us, we are none of His, that is, we are not Christians at all, we are not born again, we are not children of God. In the second place, if Christ be in us, that is, if we are children of God and have the Holy

Spirit indwelling us, then, though the body is still counted a dead thing because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. And, thirdly, the assurance is given us that even these mortal bodies, which have not yet entered into the fulness of the inheritance of sonship, will be revivified by the indwelling Spirit.

These statements of verses 10 and 11 may require further examination, though the doctrine intimated in them will be developed as we go on with the chapter. The meaning of the 9th verse is that, in the case of every one in whom Christ is dwelling, that is, of every Christian, the body, according to God's reckoning, is dead because of sin, and is yet to be redeemed from death (compare v. 23); and meanwhile, the spirit, that is, the saint's own personal spirit, is life because of righteousness. The life of Christ is imparted to the believer's spirit on the ground of gospel-righteousness, and it will never again be made subject to death. The body, on the other hand, is not yet redeemed from death. The redemption price has been paid even for the body, but the redemption itself has not yet reached the body, and will not until our Lord catches us up to Himself at the rapture of the church. For this present time the bodies of Christians are just as truly bodies of death as the bodies of unbelievers. Christians grow sick and die just like other people, and this will go on until "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," is fully accomplished at the first resurrection. But, in the

meantime, while saints equally with sinners are subject to bodily death, they are not subject to spiritual death. As to their spirits, they have all entered into eternal life, and death hath no more dominion over them. And this is all "because of righteousness," the righteousness wrought out for us by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. He is "the Lord, our Righteousness."

The believer, having the Holy Spirit indwelling him, may find in the fact of that indwelling a pledge and guaranty of the coming redemption of His body, for "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (that is, make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you"(11). The same argument is found in the words of the Lord Jesus in Jno. 14: 1-3: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me.....If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself." And the same argument is found again in 1 Thes. 4: 14: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

2. **"Ye have received the Spirit of adoption"** (12-17). This paragraph discusses our new relationship in the family of God:

(1) **"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh"** (12). The two verses following (13 and 14) should be read as a parenthetical statement in connection with the 12th verse: ("For if ye live according to the

flesh ye are to die. But if by the Spirit ye mortify the practices of the body ye will live, for they who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God") *(Murdock's translation)*. Which is to say that, in the sense of this passage, a Christian is one who lives according to the Holy Spirit, and that any one who lives according to the flesh is not a Christian, he is not a son of God. Sons of God are those who are led by the Spirit of God, and none others are children of God. This is the argument throughout the chapter from the beginning (compare vs. 5-8).

The Christian incentive is set forth here. We are debtors, we have a debt and our debt is not to the flesh to live according to it. We are warned against the deeds of the body in view of the fact that the body is still a dead thing in God's sight—"our body is a corpse" *(Bengel)*. The Christian's aim should always be to make the Holy Spirit the dominant power in his life.

(2) **"Ye have received the Spirit of adoption"** (15). Adoption, in the Scriptures, means literally, placing as a son. Under the old Roman law, when a son reached the age of maturity he was publicly inducted into partnership with his father, and recognized as his heir and successor, and this public function was designated by the word "adoption," or "son-placing." Under the Old Testament, Israel's relation was not that of full sonship, but, under the new covenant, the believer at his new birth is at once given the

place of full-grown sonship. This is his position as the gift of God's grace, and when the Holy Spirit thereupon takes up His abode in the believer's body, He enters as the Spirit of adoption, giving the believer deliverance from bondage and fear, and causing him to cry, "Abba, Father." The expression here is, "Abba, the Pater," Abba being the Hebrew and Chaldean word for father, and Pater the Greek form of the same word. As Paul uses it here, the expression is a repetition of the words used by the Lord Jesus in Mk. 14: 36, and they are found again, in much the same connection as here, in Gal. 4: 6.

(3) **"The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God"** (16). This great fact of sonship is the thing for which justification through faith paved the way. Salvation does not, by any means, stop with justification. God's purpose in delivering us from sin was that He might make us His sons. This He could not righteously do until our sins were righteously disposed of, but the blood having been shed which cleanseth us from all sin, He has been enabled to exercise His divine power in our regeneration, and then to open wide His arms of love and receive us unto Himself as His "dear children" (Eph. 5: 1).

(4) **"And if children, then heirs"** (17). Think of it, God's heirs and Christ's co-heirs! Not joint-heirs in the sense of dividing with Him the inheritance, but rather, in the sense of entering together with Him into the whole inheritance.

(5) **"If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together"** (17). The "if" here is not conditional; it is rather to be read, "since indeed we suffer with Him," for this is the common lot of Christians. It is another descriptive phrase to define what a Christion is. A Christian is one who suffers with Christ. "For even hereunto were ye called" (1 Pet. 2:21), and "unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29). The apostle does not here enter into discussion as to the degrees of suffering through which Christians may pass. It is doubtless true that some Christians know more of the ministry of suffering than others, but it is also true that to every child of God there is appointed a ministry of suffering which he cannot fully escape, even if he would. "Yea, and **all** that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). "It is almost an axiom of the gospel," says Dr. Stifler, "that the path to glory is the path of pain (Mk. 10:38; Phil. 2:9). Therefore the intelligent believer does not hesitate to undergo sorrow in his service to Christ; he rather covets it in order that he may be glorified with Him; for the joint heirs are those who suffer that they may be glorified. Suffering is the seed that ripens in fruit of glory."

3. **"In hope were we saved"** (18-27). The Holy Spirit indwelling God's children as the

Spirit of hope, leads them to look forward into the future, "for that blessed hope" of their Lord's return:

(1) **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward"** (18). The "in us" of the King James Version is incorrect. The glory has already been revealed **in us** in great measure, but there is a glory to be revealed **toward us** when our Lord shall come again. In 1 Pet. 1:11 and elsewhere, the sufferings of Christ are linked with the glory that shall follow, and our sufferings and glory are of course closely identified with His. When He shall appear, or be manifested, we are to be manifested with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). Our manifestation as the sons of God shining in the glory of our Father is dealt with in the passage before us, but prior to our manifestation with the Lord Jesus, when He shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, there is to be a revelation of His glory unto, or toward, us. We are to see Him as He is in order that we may become like Him (1 Jno. 3:2, 3). And this glory that shall be revealed toward us is so great that the present sufferings, however great they may be, are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory.

(2) **"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God"** (19, *R. V.*). The material world itself is

pictured here as upon the tiptoe of expectancy, so great is the glory about to be revealed, when the children of God shall be manifested in His likeness.

(3) **"For the creation was subjected to vanity"** (20, 21, *R. V.*). Upon this complicated passage we quote Dr. Stifler at length:

"As God's sons look with longing to the future, first, because their present condition is painful and is not the ideal condition, and, secondly, because the future will bring them redemption, just so the creation, personified all through this passage, looks to the same future, first, because it is now under the curse, and, secondly, in the future, in the glorification of the faithful, it will find deliverance. The 20th verse gives a reason for the 'earnest expectation' drawn from the present condition of creation, and the next verse a reason (when we read 'because') drawn from the future. 'Was made subject to vanity' is ambiguous. Creation was not **made** so, for originally creation was 'good,' and it was subjected to vanity, that is, to attain to no good end permanently. Any good that comes from creation must be evoked by man's hard toil. This condition did not come about by its own will ('willingly'), but because of Him (God) Who subjected it to vanity, not finally, but upon a basis of some provision for the future, called 'hope.' This verse clearly implies that creation ('all nature') is neither in its original condition nor in its final condition. It fell when man fell (Gen. 3: 17-19); it shall be restored when he is, and shall be no longer subject to vanity, but to him (Heb. 2: 5-9). It is eagerly awaiting the revelation of God's sons, because that is the time when it 'also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption (the subjection, v. 20) into the liberty of the glory ('glorious liberty' is wrong) of the children of

God.' The creation is promised the liberty of the glory, not the glory."

(4) **"For we know that the whole creation groaneth"** (22, 23). No one with the anointed eye can fail to discern the universal sufferings of "this nether world," and the Spirit of God tells us here why the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain. This reason is given in the 23d verse, where the supplied word "they" should read "it," for it refers to "the whole creation" of the preceding verse. Not only it, but ourselves also, though we have the firstfruits of salvation in the presence of the indwelling Spirit of God, groan within ourselves, and we are all waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Christians are already sons of God in the fullest sense, but that fact has not yet been made manifest to the world. Adoption, in the New Testament sense, is already ours (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5), but it is a matter of faith for the present time, and our sonship is not publicly proclaimed, so to speak, and will not be until the glad day of redemption to which this passage points. Then, even our bodies, these bodies of our humiliation, shall be transformed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, by that same power by which He is able also to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3:21). Our bodies, in common with the material creation generally, are now suffering in the bondage of corruption. They are "dead because of sin" (v. 10), but in that

day their deliverance will come. 'For this corruptible must needs put on incorruptibility, and this mortal put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word written: Death has been swallowed up in victory" (*Darby's Translation*).

(5) **"For in hope were we saved"** (24, 25, *R. V.*). The King James Version breaks down again here. The 1911 Bible reads: "For in that hope were we saved." The Holy Spirit of God, immediately upon the believer's regeneration, directs his attention to the blessed hope set before him. Things are not to go on forever as they are at present. The grace of God that bringeth salvation has not only delivered us from the consequences of sin by the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, but it has also put us under instruction, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present age; and it has put before us a blessed hope in connection with the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour (Tit. 2: 11-13). It is in that hope, therefore, that we have been saved. The hope for the present is a matter of faith, for "hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

(6) **"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our**

infirmity" (26, 27, *1911 Bible*). It is not "infirmities," as the King James Version puts it. The reference is to one particular infirmity, namely, in that "we know not how to pray as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." This is the third groaning mentioned in this chapter: the burdened creation groans, the children of God groan, and the indwelling Holy Spirit groans; and all these groanings are expressive of a longing for the glorious deliverance that is coming in the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1:5). The 27th verse pictures God the Father as He that searcheth the hearts. And He knows the meaning even of the Spirit's unutterable groaning "because He (the Spirit) maketh intercession for the saints (even in the groanings which cannot be uttered) according to the will of God." There is surely comfort here for the weakest saint of God, who often finds himself unable even to pray. "The Spirit Himself helpeth our infirmity."

4. **"We are more than conquerors"** (28-39). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and He assures the Christian's heart by the wonderful language of this closing paragraph of this wonderful chapter:

(1) **"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose"**

(28). "His purpose" is the great thing in this passage. Who can withstand the eternal purpose of God? If salvation were offered to the believer conditionally; if something were left to his faithfulness, or his obedience, or his prayerfulness, then, indeed, the case would be hopeless, for the history of man shows that, whenever he is put under a system of probation, he breaks down. The law was such a system, and under it life was offered as a condition of obedience: "He that **doeth** these things shall live by them;" but the law proved an intolerable burden (Ac. 15: 10), a ministration of condemnation and a ministration of death (2 Cor. 3:7, 9). In the gospel, all conditions are swept aside, and whosoever will may come. He is only to come, and God does all the rest. Let him come in all his vileness and weakness, and God will not so much as mention either his vileness or his weakness, but will just take him into His loving arms, and undertake for him, and thereafter see to it that all things work together for good unto him. This is His eternal purpose which He purposed before the world was, and of course, with such a salvation, based upon such a purpose, it cannot be otherwise than that all things shall work together for good unto the children of God.

(2) **"For whom He did foreknow"** (20, 30). The word "for" has the force of "because," and it introduces the reason for our assurance that all things are working together for our good.

He foreknew us; He also predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren; He also called us with an effectual calling; and He also justified us, and He has also glorified us. The past tense continues through the whole passage, although the glorification is yet future, for God is able to count things done even when they have not yet been done. Our glorification is according to His purpose, and nothing is to be suffered to thwart His purpose. Having been foreknown and predestinated and called and justified, we shall also be glorified.

(3) **"What shall we then say to these things?"** (31). What indeed can be said? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And what matters it whether any power is against us! Shall we be afraid of anything, with God on our side?

(4) **"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"** (32). It would, indeed, be strange if God should withhold any good thing from those to whom He had given His Son. In Christ, all things are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

(5) **"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"** (33). It is probable that in this whole passage Paul has followed the form of queries, and that the rest of this verse should

read, as in the 1911 Bible, "Shall God, that justifieth?" And surely, if God—Who has justified, and Who has therefore precluded any possibility of bringing a charge against us—if He has nothing to accuse us of, then it matters very little that we be judged of man's judgment (1 Cor. 4:3). And as for Satan, who accuseth the brethren day and night before God, we need not fear him, for God has justified us, and that ends the matter. Satan is unable to bring anything new against us, for God knoweth us altogether, and He has found a way to be just and at the same time our Justifier.

(6) **"Who is he that condemneth? Is it Christ, Who died, yea rather, Who is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us?"** (34, *1911 Bible*). This surely ought to comfort every believer's heart. There is nothing to fear from Him who died for us, and rose again, and Who now ever liveth to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).

(7) **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"** (35-37). Shall it be tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? God's children have always been hated by the world, and whenever such persecution has been permitted, they have been "accounted as sheep for the slaughter;" and yet all these things have only tended to increase their devotion and their faithfulness, and to establish their integrity as witnesses unto Christ.

(8) **"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"** (37). To be more than a conqueror means to be unconquerable. A man might be a victor at one time, and a victim at another; but not so here, for through Him that loved us we are kept, "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed" (1 Pet. 1:5).

(9) **"For I am persuaded"** (38, 39). This joyful song of triumph with which the chapter closes has been a tower of strength to the children of God ever since it was written. The chapter opened with "no condemnation," and it closes with "no separation." God will never condemn one of His children, though He may be compelled in faithfulness to chasten him (1 Cor. 11:31, 32); and God will never lose one of His children who has come unto Him through Christ. For such a one these words come from the Father's own heart: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Thus endeth the main argument of the epistle. The dreadful malady of sin was described in all its hideousness in the first main division, but, if the disease was terrible, the remedy is quite sufficient. God, in the gospel, has provided a righteousness without spot, that **saves** and **cleanses** and **keeps** the believer, even unto eternity.

"My sheep," says the Good Shepherd, "hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father, Which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (Jno. 10: 27-29).

THIRD MAIN DIVISION: THE VINDICATION OF GOD'S WAYS

(Chapters 9 to 11)

We now come to a new section of our epistle, consisting of the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters, and containing the "theodicy," or the vindication of the ways of God in His dealings with Israel.

"In chapters 9 to 11," says Dwight,

"the second main objection to the doctrine of justification by faith is considered—namely, that, by reason of the rejection of all unbelieving Jews which it involves, it contradicts the promises of God and His covenant with His chosen people."

"Paul could not do otherwise," says H. A. W. Meyer;

"he **must** settle this great problem; this is inevitably demanded by all that had gone before. For if the whole previous treatise had as its result, that only **believers** were the recipients of the promised salvation, and if nevertheless the Messianic promise and destination to salvation had their reference in the first place (compare 1:16) to the Israelites, concerning whom, however, experience showed that they were for the most part **unbelieving** (compare Jno. 1:11), this contradictory relation thus furnished an **enigma,** which Paul, with his warm love for his people, could least of all evade, but in the solution of which he had on the con-

trary to employ all the boldness and depth of his clear insight into the divine plan of redemption (Eph. 3:4, ff.) The **defence of the efficacy of his Gentile apostleship** (Th. Schott, and in another way Mangold and Sabatier) is not the **object** of the section—that object Paul would have known how to meet directly—but such a defence results indirectly from it, since we see from the section how fully the apostle had recognized and comprehended his place in connection with the divine plan of salvation. The **problem itself,** the solution of which is now taken in hand by the apostle, was sufficiently serious and momentous to be treated with so much detail in this great and instructive letter to the important mixed community of the world's capital, which, however, does not thereby appear to have been a Jewish-Christian one."

Dr. Scofield remarks that

"this great passage is really a parenthesis. Chapter 12, which begins, 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies,' etc., is the resumption of the line of thought and revelation abruptly interrupted at the end of chapter 8. But, as Professor Stifler has pointed out with a clearness and force unequalled by any other commentator on Romans, logic required the apostle to insert this section at this precise point. It is convenient for us to forget the Jew. It is easy, too, for usually Christians know almost nothing of distinctive Jewish covenant and promise. Futhermore, there still lingers in some minds the old and often disproved notion that Christians are now the true Israel. But to the apostolic church the question of the relation of Judaism to the new institution, the church, was the most living and burning of questions. Having, therefore, brought the entire race into one common condemnation as sinners, and opened the one and only salvation in the gospel, the question inevitably emerges, What, then, becomes of the

Davidic covenant, confirmed by the oath of God and renewed to the mother of Jesus by the angel Gabriel? What becomes of the repeated, specific, and absolutely unconditional promises of the restoration of all Israel to the land of their fathers, and the establishment again of the monarchy in the person of a Messiah, Who should be Son and Heir of David? This section is the apostle's answer. Just as James, in the Jerusalem council, showed that the acceptance of the Gentiles by faith without circumcision not only did not contradict the prophets, but 'agreed' with them, since they had predicted the restoration as occurring after the return of the Lord (Ac. 15: 14-17); so Paul, only more at length, explains that this gospel age is an interregnum fully foreseen by the prophets, and that, so far from having done with national Israel, the Deliverer shall yet come out of Zion, and 'all Israel (not 'every Israelite') shall be saved'" (*"Scofield Correspondence Course"*).

In introducing this section, Mr. Darby says that

"there remained one important question to be considered, namely, how this salvation, common to Jew and Gentile, both alienated from God—this doctrine that there was no difference—was to be reconciled with the special promises made to the Jews. The proof of their guilt and ruin under the law did not touch the promises of a faithful God. Was the apostle going to do away with these to place the Gentiles on the same footing? They did not fail also to accuse the apostle of having despised his nation and its privileges. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 reply to this question; and, with rare and admirable perfection, set forth the position of Israel with respect to God and to the gospel. This reply opens, in itself, a wide door to intelligence in the ways of God" (*"Synopsis"*).

"The grace of the gospel has now been carried to its issue in glory," says Mr. Grant (*"Numerical Bible"*).

"The doctrine of the epistle is so far concluded; but we have yet to see the bearing of all this upon Israel, and special promises given to her of God. The sin of man at large and of Israel, we may say especially, has been fully proved. 'There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' but that does not affect at all the question of the faithfulness of God to His own Word. Let man be what he may; if God has spoken, He will surely fulfil what He has promised, and here we have to remember that the promise to Abraham was indeed not directly to the nation at all, and therefore the standing or fall of the nation could not affect it. It was absolute grace in its nature, and as we see in the 15th chapter of Genesis, if trial and suffering, if the furnace were needed as well as the lamp, the covenant included both, in order to work out the purpose of God. When the law came in, it was exceptional entirely, as the apostle says, 'it came in by the way,' and for the purpose, not of putting Israel's title to the inheritance upon a new foundation, but really in order to show that nothing but absolute grace could be the foundation of such promises as hers. The law was the ministration of death and condemnation, as we have fully seen, and if the inheritance were of law, as the apostle tells us afterwards, it were no more of promise. Law and promise are in absolute contrast, in contradiction, one may say, to one another. Israel chose the law, and so far, therefore, as she could do it, gave up the grace in which God in fact had been hitherto dealing with her, to accept the recompense of her own desert. She found this in result; and it was seen from the beginning that it would be terribly against her. The new covenant, which still remains to be fulfilled, provides for the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, but

to a people who have sinned, and expressly in view of their sins; but it is absolute grace once more. It is all God's 'I will,' not the legal, 'Thou shalt.' Thus, these unconditional promises must be fulfilled. The prophets fill them out and show us Israel on their conversion as a nation not lost in the midst of the Gentiles, but, on the contrary, the centre of the divine rule for the earth and in special nearness to the divine King. The promises of the Old Testament have nothing to do with heaven, no thought of any one going there. They concern the earth; and here the blessing for the earth of necessity implies the blessing for Israel. Isaiah affirms the eternal perpetuity of their seed and name, not merely for the millennium, but 'as the new heavens and the new earth,' says God, 'which I will make, shall remain before Me, so shall her seed and her name remain.' Thus Israel's distinct existence, and as it is implied, distinct privilege, remains eternal. There is no escape from this, except into the utter confusion in which so many are, between the earthly people and the heavenly, Israel and the church. If we will only read Scripture with the simplicity which belongs to it, if we will only allow that God means exactly what he says, there will be no difficulty at all in discerning that Israel's promises abide in spite of all that has come in apparently to set them aside, and (for a time) in fact has done so."

Before proceeding to the study of the section, let us heed this word of caution from Dean Alford:

"In no part of the epistles of St. Paul, is it more requisite than in this portion to bear in mind his habit of insulating the one view of the subject under consideration with which he is at the time dealing. The divine side of the history of Israel and the world is in the greater part of this portion thus insulated: the facts of the divine dealings and the divine decrees insisted on, and the mun-

dane or human side of that history kept for the most part out of sight, and only so much shown as to make it manifest that the Jews, on their part, failed of attaining God's righteousness, and so lost their share in the gospel. It must also be remembered that, whatever inferences, with regard to God's disposal of individuals, may justly lie from the apostle's arguments, the assertions here made by him are universally spoken with a national reference. Of the eternal salvation or rejection of any individual Jew there is here no question: and however logically true of any individual the same conclusion may be shown to be, we know as a matter of fact that in such cases not the divine but the human side is that ever held up by the apostle—the universality of free grace for all—the riches of God's mercy to all who call on Him, and consequent exhortations to all to look to Him and be saved. The apparent inconsistencies of the apostle, at one time speaking of absolute decrees of God, and at another of culpability in man,—at one time of the election of some, at another of a hope of the conversion of all,—resolve themselves into the necessary conditions of thought under which we all are placed, being compelled to acknowledge the divine sovereignty on the one hand, and human free will on the other, and alternately appearing to lose sight of one of these, as often as for the time we confine our view to the other."

Proceeding now to the consideration of the section in detail, we find it yielding itself readily to simple analysis, in keeping with the chapter divisions: (1) Israel's failure and rejection acknowledged (ch. 9); (2) Israel's rejection is the result of Israel's failure (ch. 10); (3) Israel's rejection is neither complete nor final (ch. 11). The object of the Spirit of truth in the

whole section is to show that "the ways of the Lord are right ways."

I. ISRAEL'S FAILURE AND REJECTION ACKNOWLEDGED (CHAPTER 9.)

1. **"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart"** (1, 2). The change from the triumphant strain of the preceding chapter is startling. Dr. Stifler suggests that it may be accounted for psychologically. "The apostle," says he, "had just been contemplating the certainty of the glory of the sons of God; his heart goes now to the other extreme, the failure and misery of his own countrymen. The vehement language was necessary, because in giving the gospel to the heathen Paul was looked upon by the Jew as the enemy of his own nation. Some of the Roman church, knowing as they did the exclusiveness of the Jews, might be persuaded that Paul was an apostate rather than an apostle of God. He must defend himself. He is about to outline Israel's shame. Let it be seen that the picture is drawn not by an enemy, but by a loving friend, whose heart is breaking as he paints."

2. **"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"** (3). Many and varied are the comments on this verse, the writers often shrinking from the obvious meaning of the

words as they stand. Wakefield cuts the troublesome knot at one stroke by reading: "I have great grief and continual sorrow of heart (for I also was once an alien from Christ) on account of my brethren," etc. In a note he says: "I see no method of solving the difficulty in this verse, which has so exercised the learning and ingenuity of commentators, but by the *euchomai einai* of Homer—**I profess myself to be.** This solution makes the passage rational and plain." Alford holds that the literal reading is, "I was wishing," etc., and says: "This imperfect tense is not **historical,** alluding to his days of Pharisaism, as some have supposed, but implies, as very often, a half-expression of a desire: **'I was wishing, had it been possible.'**" Darby reads, "For I have wished, I myself, to be a curse from Christ for my brethren," and remarks: "Moses, in his anguish, had said, 'Blot me out of Thy book.' Paul had not been behind him in his love." In his "New Testament in Braid Scots," William Wye Smith renders: "There is muckle dool to me, and constant sorrow i' my heart, for I mysel' coud hae wiss't mysel' devotit by Christ, for my brethren's sake, my kin eftir the flesh." In a note he says: "Sinder't frae ony common use; as was an offeran i' the temple. The sense is obscure: and we haena Paul to expone it. While it may mean torn frae a' things in this life, and frae life itsel', it disna mean sinder't frae Christ for eternity." And John Wesley, in his Notes on

the New Testament, says of the passage: "Human words cannot fully describe the motions of souls that are full of God. As if he had said, I could wish to suffer in their stead; yea, to be an anathema from Christ in their place. In how high a sense he wished this, who can tell, unless himself had been asked, and had resolved the question? Certainly he did not then consider himself at all, but only others, and the glory of God. The thing could not be; yet the wish was pious and solid; though with a tacit condition, if it were right and possible." "The language," says Stifler, "is startling and has troubled many; but it is in the very spirit of Israel's great leader, Moses (Ex. 32:32), and may we not say, though the word is different, in the spirit of Christ (Gal. 3:13)? Besides, this is not the language of deliberation, but of heart-breaking passion, in which he says, 'I could (were it permitted or were it possible) wish myself accursed (away) from (not 'by') Christ.' It is this grief at the loss of men, this intense yearning for their salvation, that made Paul the preacher he was."

3. **"Who are Israelites"** (4). In chapter 3 the question was raised, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" And the answer was ready: "Much every way." That answer is amplified in the sevenfold summary found in our 9th chapter. Surely, Israel's position before God was one to be coveted; for to this people pertaineth:

(1) **"The adoption."** They were adopted as

God's people from among the nations. Their adoption, as spoken of here, is not individual, but national. It is a different thing from the New Testament adoption, but it is yet a thing to be greatly desired, and a thing for which to be deeply grateful.

(2) **"And the glory."** The Shekinah cloud of glory led them and followed them in their wilderness wanderings. Thus they had been made companions of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 6:4).

(3) **"And the covenants."** The Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, the Davidic covenant—all were theirs, and all are yet theirs, despite their failure. The Gentiles, on the contrary, are "aliens from the commonwealth," and therefore "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

(4) **"And the giving of the law."** The Gentiles "have not the law" (Rom. 2:14). "If others boasted of their Solons and Lycurguses, how far juster ground of boasting is there of the Lord as lawgiver" (*Calvin*).

(5) **"And the service."** They alone, among all the nations of the world, had an authorized form of worship; they were taught the way of approach to God.

(6) **"And the promises."** Even the promise of the Redeemer was peculiarly Israel's, though it was first given to the whole race in Eden, for it was ultimately confined to the seed of Abra-

ham, Isaac and Jacob, the tribe of Judah, and house of David. Let it not be forgotten that the Lord Jesus Christ was primarily "a minister **of the circumcision** for the truth of God, **to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,**" and that the showing of mercy to the Gentiles was a thing that came afterwards (Rom. 15:8, 9). In Heb. 7:6, Abraham is described as **"him that had the promises."**

(7) **"Whose are the fathers."** What other nation ever had such fathers? "Abraham, the head of many nations, Isaac, and Jacob, were theirs; other nations had great ancestors, but Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have the honor of being not merely natural, but divinely chosen chiefs" (*Stifler*).

4. **"And of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came"** (5). "Besides these seven all their own, the Israelites had one other honor in which they shared, an honor that overtops all the rest. The 'whose' changes to 'of whom.' The fathers were theirs, but the Christ, though He came from them in His human relation, belongs to the world" (*Stifler*). "The expression ('and of whom is Christ, so far as regards the flesh') implies that He was not **entirely** sprung from them, but had another nature; **'on His human side,'—'as far as pertains to His human body'"** (*Alford*).

5. **"Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen"** (5). There has been much controversy

over the punctuation and application of this Scripture. Those who deny our Lord's deity insist that we should read here, **"Blessed for ever be the God Who is over all!"** and that the words are to be understood as a doxology to the Father. By the early church, however, it was generally rendered as in our English Bible, and applied to Christ. This rendering, says Dean Alford, "is not only that most agreeable to the usage of the apostle, but the only one admissible by the rules of grammar and arrangement. It also admirably suits the context: for, having enumerated the historic advantages of the Jewish people, he concludes by stating one which ranks far higher than all,—that from them sprung, according to the flesh, He Who is God over all, blessed for ever." H. A. W. Meyer, though opposing this view, yet acknowledges that the words **may be** interpreted as referring to Christ; and both Weiss and Dwight, Meyer's editors, agree with Alford's conclusions as above. Stifler says that "Sanday, after an exhaustive examination of all the arguments bearing on the punctuation of this passage, 'with some slight, but only slight, hesitation,' admits that Paul here applies the name God to Christ."

The claim is made that Paul does not anywhere else call Christ God. But this is an error, for Paul calls Christ God in Ac. 20:28; in Col. 1:16 he declares that "all things were made by Him and for Him;" and in Col. 2:9 he writes

that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In addition to this, there is little doubt that Hebrews was written by Paul, and in the first chapter of that epistle Christ is repeatedly called by names of deity.

However, no one who really knows Christ denies or doubts His deity. By His supernatural birth (Isa. 7:13, 14; Mat. 1:22, 23), and by His supernatural resurrection from the dead (Jno. 8:46; Rom. 1:4), as well as by all that lay between, He was shown to be God in the flesh. We receive Him as such, and adore Him as such, bowing before Him with His disciple Thomas, and worshipping Him as our Lord and our God.

6. **"Not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect"** (6-13). There had been failure, but the failure was not God's. The people had broken down, but the great promises of the covenant were not conditional promises, they were not made to depend upon the faithfulness of the people. The Word of God must be fulfilled. "If we are faithless, He abideth faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2:13, *R. V.*). In the paragraph before us, all this is brought out in answer to the natural questionings that would arise in regard to God's dealings with Israel. The case is not "as though the Word of God hath taken none effect," or as though it "hath come to nought" (*R. V.*), or as though it "had failed" (*1911 Bible*). The Word of God still remained unbroken. The promise of God

had not been set aside. The proof of this is in what follows:

(1) **"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel"** (6). The promise was not for all the nation of Israel. The apostle is making a distinction here between natural Israelites and those among them who were men of faith. Believing Gentiles are not in view just now, though they are elsewhere called Abraham's spiritual seed. In the passage before us, he is considering only the two kinds of Israelites, the natural and the spiritual Israel (compare Rom. 4: 1-3; Gal. 3: 6, 7; Jno. 8: 37-39).

(2) **"Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called"** (7). Abraham had other children besides Isaac. Ishmael was born before Isaac, and there were many sons born afterward of Keturah (Gen. 25: 1-4), and yet the Messianic promise was confined to Isaac and his seed. The principle of God's sovereign elective grace is thus established at the outset. The Jew could not deny this principle, and thus shut out the Gentiles from the promise, unless he was willing to include the Ishmaelites and the descendants of Keturah with himself in the promise. "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son" (vs. 8, 9, compare Gen. 21: 12; 18: 10).

(3) **"And not only this"** (10). The apostle now cites the case of Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca. While these children were yet in their mother's womb, before they had done any good or evil, "It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger" (v. 12, compare Gen. 25:23). The reason given for this decree is simply, "that the purpose of God...might stand." It is "according to election...not of works, but of him that calleth" (v. 11). In the case of Ishmael, it might be objected, that, being born of a slave woman, he was set aside on that account, but this objection cannot stand as touching the case of Esau and Jacob. Though they were twins, Esau was yet the first-born, and God decreed that this first-born should be subject to his younger brother, and, as we have observed, the only reason given for it is that it was according to the purpose of God. The decree itself went far beyond the persons of Esau and Jacob, as will be seen by reference to the Scripture cited, Gen. 25:23: "And Jehovah said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (*R. V.*). On this Dean Alford says: "But the nations must be considered as spoken of in their progenitors, and the elder nation is in fact that sprung from the elder brother. History records several subjugations of Edom by the kings of Judah; first

by David (2 Sam. 8:14);—under Joram they rebelled (2 Ki. 8:20), but were defeated by Amaziah (2 Ki. 14:7), and Elath taken from them by Uzziah (2 Ki. 14:22); under Ahaz they were again free, and troubled Judah (2 Chron. 28:16, 17, compare 2 Ki. 16:6, 7)—and continued free, as prophesied in Gen. 27:40, till the time of John Hyrcanus, who reduced them finally, so that thenceforward they were incorporated among the Jews: **as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated** (there is no necessity here to soften the 'hated' into 'loved less': the words in Malachi proceed on the fullest meaning of **hate,** see v. 4, 'The people against whom Jehovah hath indignation for ever')."

7. **"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?"** (14-18). The apostle's exclamatory reply, "God forbid!" is the language of faith, for faith cannot for a moment tolerate the insinuation that there is unrighteousness with God:

(1) **"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion"** (15). "Paul finds the argument for his vehement denial of injustice in God," says Dr. Stifler, "not by abstract reasoning about the idea of justice, but in the Scriptures. The quotation is from Ex. 33:19. The great Jewish captain is earnestly seeking grace from God. It might be supposed that he could attain it on the ground

of his office and merit; but even 'to Moses,' God saith, He gives mercy not because he is Moses, or because he seeks it, but just because it is God's 'will' to do so. It is a bold, crisp assertion of the divine freedom in bestowing grace. 'In any case through human history wherein I shall be seen to have mercy, the one account I give of the radical cause is this—**I have mercy'** (*Moule*). Mercy is the outward manifestation of the feeling of compassion." And according to Dean Alford, "The meaning apparently is, 'Whenever I have mercy on any, it shall be **pure mercy,** no human desert contributing;' which agrees better with the next verse than the ordinary rendering, which lays the stress on the **'whomsoever;'** and is not inconsistent with v. 18, 'he hath mercy on whom he will;' because if God's mercy be **pure mercy** without any desert on man's part, it necessarily follows that He has mercy on whom He will, His will being the only assignable cause of the selection."

(2) **"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy"** (16). The human element is simply excluded. Mercy is shown not according as men will to receive it, or run after it, but according to God's own purpose. We shall return to this a little further on in the chapter.

(3) **"For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and**

that My name might be declared throughout all the earth" (17). The quotation here is from Ex. 9:16, and it leads to the conclusion of our 18th verse: "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth."

"Ten times in the Scripture," says Dr. Stifler, "about Pharaoh it is said he hardened himself; but Paul makes no account of this, for his clear intention is to account for Pharaoh's overthrow by the free purpose of God.

And yet God did not harden him for the sake of the hardening, but that the divine power might have a field of display and that the divine name might become known. If Pharaoh had willingly and sweetly allowed the people to depart, there could have been no miracles 'in Egypt and in the Red Sea' (Ac. 7:36), and the children of Israel would have had no fame as God's own chosen, a fame that endured for centuries (1 Sam. 5:8)..... God is absolute sovereign, allowing nothing to direct His activity but His own will. His Word is true, as true, as He is, but He has never uttered a word to abridge His freedom. This hardening process is going on to-day; it can be read as clearly in current history as in God's Word. And yet man is also free in choosing God and free in refusing Him. The reconciliation of these two is a question of philosophy, and philosophy fails in the effort. The Bible does not attempt it, but stops with asserting that both are realities."

Augustine says:

"Let it be enough for the Christian, living as yet by faith, and not yet seeing what is perfect, but know-

ing it only in part, to know, or to believe, that God acquits none except of His free mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and condemns none, except of most equitable justice, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. But why He acquits or does not acquit one rather than another, let him who can, search into the so great deep of His judgments: but—let him beware of the precipitous descent."

Mr. Darby says, that God's sovereignty is the first of all rights.

"But in what case had He exercised this right? In a case that concerned that right of Israel to blessing, of which the Jews sought to avail themsleves. All Israel would have been cut off, if God had dealt in righteousness; there was nothing but the sovereignty of God which could be a door of escape. God retreated into His sovereignty in order to spare whom He would, and so had spared Israel (justice would have condemned them all alike, gathered round the golden calf which they set up to worship)—this, on the side of mercy; on that of judgment, Pharaoh served for an example. The enemy of God, and of His people, he had treated the claims of God with contempt, exalting himself proudly against Him—'Who is Jehovah that I should obey Him? I will not let His people go.' Pharaoh being in this state, Jehovah uses him to give an example of His wrath and judgment. So that He shows mercy to whom He will, and hardens whom He will. Man complains of it, as he does of the grace that justifies freely."

8. **"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?"** (19-24). The objector has taken an advanced step here. Up to this point he has been content merely to call God's justice into question,

but now he practically charges God with injustice:

(1) **"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"** (20). "Such replying," as Mr. Grant points out, "must necessarily be in vain. Could one succeed in establishing his cause against Him, what could it be? It would be the ruin of everything. Think of being able to show that God was not the righteous, holy, gracious God He is! Think of the disaster everywhere which would result from such a thing! The moment we speak of God, we must be still and know that He is God; and the apostle insists upon this in the first place."

(2) **"Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"** (20, 21). The word "power," in this passage, the Revision changes to "right"—"Hath not the potter a right over the clay?" There is reference here to Isa. 29:16, where it is written: "Shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?" Again, in Isa. 45:9, we read: "Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?" In the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, 33:13, there is similar language: "As the clay is in the potter's hand to fashion it at his pleasure,

so man is in the hand of Him that made him to render to them as liketh Him best." Again, in the book of Wisdom, 15:7, it is written: "For the potter, tempering soft earth, fashioneth every vessel with much labour for our service: yea, of the same clay he maketh both the vessels that serve for clean uses, and likewise also all such as serve to the contrary: but what is the use of either sort the potter himself is the judge." There is a word from Jehovah in Jer. 18:6, saying, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith Jehovah. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel." The same figure is employed in 2 Tim. 2:20, 21, though with a different purpose in view. What we have in the 9th of Romans is the free sovereignty of God. It is well to remember this, and to follow Dean Alford's example. He says:

"I must pause here to remind the student, that I purposely do not enter on the disquisition so abundant in some commentaries on this part of Scripture, by which it is endeavored to reconcile the sovereign election of God with our free will. **We shall find that free will asserted strongly enough for all edifying purposes by this apostle, when the time comes.** At present, he is employed wholly in asserting the divine sovereignty, the glorious vision of which it ill becomes us to distract by continual downward looks on this earth. .....It is in parts of Scripture like this, that we must be especially careful **not to fall short of what is written:** not to allow of any compromise of the plain and awful words of God's Spirit for the sake of a caution which He Himself does not teach us."

(3) **"What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"** (22-24). The word "willing," in the 22d verse, should be read, "wishing," or "purposing." The meaning of the passage is, that, while God has a perfect right to destroy all sinners at once, He has also a right to show mercy where He wills, and to restrain His wrath where He wills, in order to fulfill His purpose.

9. **"As he saith"** (25-29):

(1) Two quotations from Hosea (2:23; 1:10) are cited in vs. 25 and 26. By referring to the prophecy itself, it will be seen that, in both cases, the direct application was to Israel, while the citation in Romans has reference to the Gentiles. "Both passages," Mr. Grant remarks, "refer to God's purposes with regard to Israel in the time to come, but as a principle they equally show how He is acting and how He has title to act in His present grace. The men of the Gentiles, who were not His people, He is calling His people; and where He had said unto them, 'Ye are not My people,' there they are now called of Him His children. The apostle does not say that this is an exact fulfillment of Hosea's words.

It is a fulfillment in principle, and that is all that is implied in his quotation."

(2) Two quotations from Isaiah are also found here. They are from Isa. 10:22, ff., and 1:9; and the apostle quotes them to prove that it is only by God's grace that even the remnant out of Israel is saved.

10. **"What shall we say then?"** (30-33). The question raised finds its answer in the words following:

(1) **"That Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have obtained righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith"** (30, *1911 Bible*). The article "the," before Gentiles, is wrongly found in both the King James and the Revised Versions. The statement would not be true as applied to "the Gentiles" en masse. It is true, however, of certain Gentiles that they have, by the sovereign grace of God, attained unto a righteousness which is of faith. In this and the next verse, we have a commentary upon the 16th verse above: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." These Gentiles who have attained to righteousness have not attained thereto through their own willing, or their own running, but through the sovereign, elective grace of God.

(2) **"But Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law"** (31, *R. V.*). Here was a nation pursuing after a law of righteousness and failing in the pursuit. They

said, when the covenant of law was proposed to them, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8).

(3)"**Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law**" (32). The 10th chapter takes up this subject and works it out in detail, showing the difference between "the righteousness which is of the law" and "the righteousness which is of faith" (compare Rom. 10:5, 6). Chrysostom and others think that, in these final verses of the chapter, there is a solution of the whole doctrinal difficulty raised by the chapter, but Alford dissents from these, and says:

"This solution is simply in the creative right of God, as declared in v. 18;—but they are a comment on v. 16, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that **runneth:** the same similitude of running being here resumed, and it being shown that, so far from man's running having decided the matter, the Jews, **who pressed forward** to the goal, attained not, whereas the Gentiles, **who never ran,** have attained. If this is lost sight of, the connection of the whole is much impaired, and, from doctrinal prejudice, a wholly wrong turn given to the apostle's line of reasoning,—who resolves the awful fact of Israel's exclusion not into any causes arising from man, but into the supreme will of God."

Stifler says:

"It is at this point that Paul passes from the sovereignty of God to the responsibility of man. The two cannot be harmonized in the human understanding, except as the Scriptures harmonize them; that is, by insisting on and holding to both. The Scriptures and

reason assert the absolute sovereignty of God, and Scripture and the human conscience assert with equal force the responsibility of man; so that the practical error arises when either one of these is denied or when one is explained in a way to exclude the other. It must also be remembered that, while man cannot save himself, moral inability does not relieve from responsibility. Man's inability lies in his sinful nature (8:7), and God cannot be made responsible for sin. The sinner's inability to do right, to do God's will, is the acme of his sin. A world of sin is a world of confusion. Sin introduced confusion between God and man, and confusion cannot be explained. The real difficulty between God's absolute sovereignty and man's responsibility is metaphysical and not Biblical. How can there be one sovereign free will and other free wills? And when Fritzsche says that Paul's view is 'absolutely contradictory,' he is virtually demanding that Paul cease preaching and turn philosopher to solve the insoluble. But Paul leaves the question where he found it, and goes on now in this and the next chapter to show that Israel's failure was their own fault."

(4) **"They stumbled at that stumblingstone"** (32). The word "for," found here in the King James Version, is omitted by the best authorities, and confuses the sense, making it appear that Israel had failed to pursue by faith because of their stumbling over the stumblingstone, which of course is Christ. Now, the fact is just the opposite from this. They stumbled at the stumblingstone because they were not pursuing righteousness by faith (*compare* 1 Cor. 1:23). As the R. V. footnote has it, "Because doing it not by faith, but as it were by works, they stumbled."

(5) **"As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed"** (33). The quotation is from Isa. 28: 16. Peter uses the same Scripture in 1 Pet. 2: 6, along with other Scriptures employing the same figure of Christ (compare Ps. 118: 22 and Isa. 8: 14).

This chapter is a test of faith, and a reasonable test. Faith trusts God. She believes that God is not only omnipotent, that is, all-powerful, but also all-wise and altogether righteous. She believes this in spite of everything, and to her the suggestion is intolerable that the Judge of all the earth should ever fail to do right. She reads in God's Word, that He hardeneth whom He will, and also that God is not willing that any should perish. These things may be irreconcilable to human reason, and they probably are, but human reason has no authority over faith. Faith believes God.

In the very nature of the case, it is of necessity that finite man should fail at some point to comprehend the infinite God. Faith follows on, walking with God, even when reason fails to comprehend. Faith trusts God in the dark. That is, after reason has entered into darkness and obscurity, faith goes on, walking not in darkness, but in the light of God, because she trusts God. Otherwise, faith need not be at all, for to walk by faith is essentially opposed to walking by

sight. When sight comes in, there is no further need for faith. Let us thank God for the privilege of trusting Him, and of walking quietly with Him, leaving our hand in His, for, though we may not know, it is always true that He knoweth the way that we take.

II. ISRAEL'S REJECTION IS THE RESULT OF ISRAEL'S FAILURE (CHAPTER 10).

1. **"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved"** (1). Paul's expression of affection here is very strong. Rotherham renders it, "Brethren! the delight of my own heart and my supplication God-ward in their behalf are for salvation."

2. **"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge"** (2). The zeal is **for** God rather than **of** God (see *R. V.*). They were zealous for God, but their zeal was not based upon correct knowledge of God.

3. **"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God"** (3). It was because of their ignorance of God's righteousness that they sought to establish their own. Had they known the meaning of righteousness from God's viewpoint they would not have admitted such a thing.

4. **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"** (4).

This verse explains the meaning of the closing words of the preceding verse. Their failure to submit themselves unto the righteousness of God consisted in their rejection of the Lord Jesus, who is The Righteousness of God, and "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The promise is written large in the Old Testament Scriptures, that one day Israel shall receive the Lord Jesus Christ and salute Him as "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:6). This will be in the day of the fulfillment unto them of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; compare Heb. 8:8-12 and Rom. 11:25-27).

5. **"The righteousness which is of the law"** (5). Moses's description of this legal righteousness is, of course, "That the man which **doeth** those things shall live by them." This is the first Old Testament citation in the chapter. It is from Lev. 18:5.

6. **"The righteousness which is of faith"** (6). In this verse, reference is had to a passage in Deut. 30:12-14. This is not because gospel-righteousness is found in that passage, but the passage serves to illustrate the perfectly plain statement of gospel-righteousness. The word of the new covenant is as clear and as comprehensible as was the plain command uttered by Jehovah through Moses unto Israel in the wilderness. It is not needful that any one should ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above, nor

into the deep to bring Him up again from the dead (vs. 6, 7). The word of the gospel "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" (8):

(1) **"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus"** (9). This is a needful condition of salvation under the new order of things. This is the way of obtaining "the righteousness which is of faith."

(2) **"And shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead"** (9). There must be heart belief. Mr. Rotherham points out that the contrast in this passage is between heart and mouth, and not between heart and head—"a distinction of which the Bible knows **nothing.**" Doubtless there is such a thing as an intellectual assent, even to the proposition of the gospel, which falls short of saving faith. To believe, in the gospel sense, is to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as one's personal Saviour, and any so-called belief which falls short of this definite reception of the Saviour is not New Testament faith. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, **even to them that believe on his name"** (Jno. 1:12). Saving faith is perhaps better understood as personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as one's own Saviour.

(3) **"Thou shalt be saved"** (9). In this verse we have one of the clearest settings forth of the gospel to be found anywhere in the Scriptures.

7. **"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"** (10). In the paragraph closing with this verse we have one of the most important statements in the Bible. Here the Holy Spirit of truth brings into sharpest contrast **the two righteousnesses.** One is **God's righteousness** and the other is **man's righteousness.** One is **divine** and the other is **human.** One is by **works;** it comes to the man who **doeth.** The other is by **grace** through **faith**—to every one that **believeth.** One is called **the righteousness which is of the law.** The other is called **the righteousness which is of faith.** One is the result of man's own **efforts.** The other is the **gift** of God in Christ to any man who will receive it. The failure of Israel is the matter under discussion. **They,** being ignorant of **God's righteousness,** went about seeking to establish their own righteousness; and when Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, came and offered Himself to them, they refused to submit themselves unto Him. The principle involved, however, is applicable not only to Jews. It is general, and applies to all men, Jews and Gentiles alike. Seven fundamental propositions may be drawn from this passage of Scripture. This is the gospel of God. In this sevenfold statement He gives us a complete unfolding of the way of life. In the midst of the awful confusion of these last days it is refreshing to get back to first

principles and examine the foundations upon which we are building. May God deliver His people from error, and ever show us His way more perfectly!

(1) **Man by nature is unrighteous.** Nothing is more strongly emphasized than this in the Word of God. Humiliating to the flesh though it be, it is nevertheless true that man is naturally corrupt. Theologians may quarrel over questions of "original sin" and "total depravity," but God has been faithful in pointing out that "the heart is **deceitful** above all things and **desperately wicked**" (Jer. 17:9). Out of the **heart** are the issues of life, and "from within, out of the **heart** of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come **from within**" (Mk. 7:21-23). Man, apart from God, is unrighteous and only unrighteous. This is shown in the terible history of the race, as given by the Holy Spirit of truth in Rom. 1. When God "gave them up," it was "unto **vile** affections." When he "gave them over," it was "to a **reprobate** mind," and they were found to be **"filled with all unrighteousness"** (vs. 26, 28, 29). It is easy for men to "compare themselves with themselves," and derive satisfaction from the comparison, but God declares that "there is **none righteous, no not one**" (Rom. 3:10). "There is no difference, for all have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22, 23). As for the Jews, "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through" them (Rom. 2:24). As to the Gentiles themselves, they are "without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world." They walk "in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart." They are "dead in trespasses and sins," and "past feeling" (Eph. 2: 1, 12; 4:17-19). The Scriptures declare that the natural man "is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22); that his mind is **"enmity** against God," that it is not and cannot be subject to God's law; and that he **"cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:7, 8). They further assert that he cannot receive "the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). Such, according to the Scriptures of God, is the helpless, hopeless, undone condition of the natural man. And in this we are all alike—we are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). Man by nature is unrighteous.

(2) **Man by nature is ignorant of God's righteousness.** Man is corrupt, and he has a corrupt mind. Therefore, his view of righteousness is **distorted.** He has his own "ideas of right and wrong," and they are **false** ideas. For

as a matter of simple fact, the **righteousness of God** is the only kind of righteousness there is. In this discussion we have spoken of two righteousnesses, but we shall find on examination that the **human** righteousness here spoken of is not righteousness at all. Righteousness is simple right-ness, and if a thing is **right** it cannot be more. On the other hand if it be not right it is of necessity **wrong.** And the **standard** of righteousness is **God's** righteousness. He is absolutely righteous. The ways of the Lord are right. God is **light,** and in Him is no darkness at all. In Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. God cannot lie, because He is righteous. He cannot repudiate a promise, because He is **righteous.** He cannot forget His Word, because He is **righteous.** But God's standard is not man's standard. The characteristic distinction between God and man is that **"God is not a man that He should lie"** (Num. 23 : 19). Man's ideas of right and wrong are low ideas, corrupt ideas, evil ideas, because they are conceived in corrupt and evil minds. Man's conception of God is distorted. It is written that "when they knew God, they glorified Him not **as God."** They conceived that God was like themselves. They "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made **like to corruptible man"** (Rom. 1 : 21-23). Having therefore corrupted their very conception of the **character** of God, they of course lost the true view

of His **righteousness.** What is the natural man's idea of the righteous requirements of a holy God? Ask the first man you meet, and he will probably tell you that "if a man tries to do right, that is all that will be expected of him." Or perhaps he will say, "If I do the best I can, God will be satisfied." Does it never occur to the natural man that in these very words he speaks there is an implied admission of his corrupt nature? For, according to these replies, he can only **try** to do right: he rarely **succeeds.** He may do the best he **can,** but of course what he does is not **perfect.** But the point here is that man who is so complacent about his own **trying** and **doing,** has an idea that God is complacent, too. Man says, "Of course, we are all sinners, and all we can do is to do the best we can." This satisfies his perverted conscience, and he thinks it also satisfies **God.** This is all wrong. God's demands are inflexible. He says to man, "Walk before me, and be thou **perfect.**" He says, "Be ye **holy,** for I am **holy.**" And His declaration is most explicit that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And though holiness and righteousness are not the same thing, yet there cannot be the one without the other. God's new creation is "in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). All this, however, is unintelligible to the natural man. For man by nature is ignorant of God's righteousness.

(3) **Man by nature, because of this ignorance, goes about to establish his own righteousness.** Of course he would never try such a thing if he had any real appreciation of what he was attempting. If he realized how high **God's righteousness** is, and then realized how low his own "ideas of right and wrong" are, he would give up at once, and be ready to wait for the grace of God. But it is not so. From the days of Cain until now, the natural man has sought to make himself presentable to God. The carnal mind is proud, and it rebels against the truth of God. Even when the truth is apprehended, man holds it down in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18, *R. V.*). The Scriptures declare that "that which may be known of God (i. e., to the natural man) is manifest in them,....so that they are without excuse." God has not left Himself without witness even among unregenerate men, but they have turned from Him: "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:19, 20, 28). So it is that men, having "rejected the counsel of God against themselves," are continually seeking to establish a righteousness of their own. Instead of consulting the Word of the living God, they consult their own consciences—i. e., their own corrupt "ideas of right and wrong." The unenlightened conscience is a most elastic thing, besides being corrupt, and the more it is listened to, apart from the testimony of the Word of God, the more accommodating it be-

comes; until finally, instead of accusing, it excuses almost any act of evil. It becomes not only **defiled** and **polluted**—it is all that by nature—but it becomes also **seared** as with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:2). Man by nature, because he is ignorant of God's righteousness, goes about to establish his own righteousness.

(4) **The only conceivable way for the natural man to establish his own righteousness is by means of his own works.** This goes without saying. If I am to have a righteousness of my own "establishing," it must be the result of my own good works. This was the method put to the test in the case of Israel. **The righteousness which is of the law** had only this word: "The man which **doeth** those things shall live by them." Not **trying,** mark you! but **doing.** And not "doing the best we can," but **doing those things.** The natural man has an idea that his good deeds and his evil deeds are to be weighed in a balance; and if the good weigh more than the evil, then "everything will be all right." His case would be bad enough even then; but that is not the method. Far from it! In the law, God said to Israel: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This has been called "the concept of the mind of God." Well, at least it is "the concept of the mind of God as to what man ought to be;" it is God's "idea of right and wrong." It is a state-

ment of God's righteousness, **the righteousness of God.** There is nothing arbitrary about it. God demanded of Israel only that which was right, or **righteous.** It was their duty, even before He issued the law, to love God supremely, and their neighbours as themselves. It follows, therefore, that if the people of Israel were to establish their own righteousness, they could do it only by **doing** those things. There was no other possible way. And the same principle obtains with men everywhere and always. The Gentiles, though they have not the law, are yet bound by the same principle of righteousness as that contained in the law. As it is written, "They show the work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom. 2 : 14, 15). It is their duty, as much as Israel's, to do **right.** And to do right means to do **righteously.** They, as well as Israel, are bound to love God supremely, and their neighbours as themselves. If they are to establish their own righteousness, this is the only way to do it. It is true universally that only he that **doeth** those things shall live by them. The only conceivable way for the natural man to establish his own righteousness is by means of his own works.

(5) **But it is impossible for any man thus to establish his own righteousness.** We have seen that the only conceivable way for the natural man to establish his own righteousness is by means of his own good works. But what if he is incapable of good works? What then? Ah,

then is his case a hopeless one, indeed. And is not this the true state of the case? If it be true that man by nature is unrighteous, how then can he do a righteous act? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one!" (Job 14: 4). "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23). Man may do things which **he** considers righteous, but in God's sight "we are all as an unclean thing, and all **our righteousnesses** are as **filthy rags**" (Isa. 64:6). "There is a way which **seemeth right unto a man,** but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:1). In the days before the flood, men supposed they were making great progress. "There were giants in the earth in those days." There were "mighty men which were of old, men of renown." But what God thought of the matter was a far different thing. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was **only evil continually**" (Gen. 6:4, 5). The end of all flesh came before God in that day, and never to this present time has God put any confidence in the flesh. The flesh, corrupt then, is corrupt now, and its works —the doings of the natural man—"are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, unclean-

ness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like" (Gal. 5: 19-21). Now, how can righteousness come from such a source? When the fountain is poisoned, how can the stream be pure? What can the law of God, which is **holy** and **righteous** and **good,** do for the natural man, who is **unholy** and **unrighteous** and **evil?** Surely, it cannot produce righteousness in him. It can only condemn him and show him his helplessness. And this is the very purpose of the law. When it speaks, every mouth is stopped, and all the world is brought in guilty before God. By the deeds of the law no flesh is justified in God's sight, for **by the law is the knowledge of sin** (Rom. 3: 20, 21). The law of Moses, the ten commandments, "written and engraven in stones," is not a ministration of life, but of death. It is not a ministration of righteousness but of condemnation (2 Cor. 3: 9). Let us remember that the law is an inflexible thing. It demands a flawless life of perfect obedience from the cradle to the grave. It brooks no slightest disobedience. If man keeps the whole law and stumbles in one point, he is guilty of all (Jas. 2: 10). It is not enough to "try to be good." It will not do to "try to do right." It will not suffice to have done "the best we could." If a man is establishing his own righteousness, why, then, let him do it. But the Word

of God will never call **wrong** by the name of **right**; it will never call evil good. Now, where is our natural man? Is he justified? Far from it! He is cursed. As the Scripture saith, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in **all** things which are written in the book of the law to **do** them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that **doeth** them shall live in them" (Gal. 3:10-12). Thus it is seen that it is impossible for any man to establish his own righteousness.

(6) **On the other hand, to obtain the gift of God's righteousness in Christ is possible for every man.** Whosoever will may come. The gift is for anyone who will have it. As there is no difference in God's sight between sinners, so there is no difference in respect of those invited. It is true that righteousness is not attainable by law-works, "but now **the righteousness of God** apart from the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto **all** and upon **all** them that believe: for there is no difference" (Rom. 3:21, 22). Not one member of the human race is excluded. White or black, rich or poor; whatever you are, whoever you are, wherever you are; no matter how sinful, no matter how vile, no matter

what you have done, no matter what your record —"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jno. 3:16). "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 Jno. 2:2). He is "the living God, Who is **the Saviour of all men**" (1 Tim. 4:10). Hallelujah, what a Saviour! "Behold, the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world!" Think of it! God's righteusness, offered to **every man!** The Lord Jesus Christ, the end of the law for righteousness when He died on Calvary, tasted death for **every** man (Heb. 2:9). No man will be able to plead that he was omitted from the great provision of salvation. The Lamb of God is the Saviour of **all** men. **"All** we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us **all."** This text (Isa. 53:6) opens and closes with the big-little word **"all."** It is like a door, placed at each end of the text. If you are included in the former **all,** you are also included in the latter **all. All** includes everybody. As the little boy said of the like word, **whosoever,** "it means you, or me, or anybody else." And He died for all. He died, for **you, and me, and everybody else.** He "died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for their sakes

died and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15). He died for **you.** Whoever you are He died for **you.** True, He died for others, but He died for **you.** If He had not died in **your** room and stead; if He had not died for **you**—for **you**—then **you** must needs perish for your sins. But He died for you that He might bring you to God—the **living** God, the **giving** God, Who waits for you to come to Him, that you might not perish but have everlasting life. He died for **you!** He died for **me!** Blessed be His holy name! For **me!** I must die if He had not—but He died for **me**—and now I have His promise that I shall never perish: that I shall never be plucked out of His hands: that I am accepted in the Beloved, that I am called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! He died for me! He died for **everybody else!** Everybody! Everybody! From Adam down to the last man in the human race, He died for them all. Before He died, many had been saved by faith in the Coming One; and since His death many have been saved by faith in the One Who came and died. He died for them all. But many were lost, before Calvary, and after. Yet He died for them. All their iniquities were laid upon Him. If they were lost, it was not His fault. If they went down to perdition, it was in spite of all He did for them. He died for them. He died for **you,** and **me,** and **everybody else.** To obtain the gift of God's righteousness in Christ is possible for every man.

(7) **God's way of bestowing His righteousness upon unrighteous man is by grace through faith.** We have seen man's helplessness to attain to righteousness by means of law-works. The law could show him the need of righteousness; it could show him what righteousness was. But it could go no further. It could not **make him righteous**; it could not **produce** righteousness in him. But God, through the gospel of Christ, has met man's need just here. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that **the righteousness of the law** might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4). What the law could not do, God did. But it had to be by grace, which is unmerited favor. Man could never have earned such a boon as the righteousness of God. He could not have deserved it. He deserved death, for that is the wages of sin. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your-

selves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:4-9). And the gift by grace is through **faith.** As it is written, "it is of faith, that it might be by grace" (Rom. 4:16). It is not a hard thing that is asked of man. No man may say in his heart, Christ must again be brought down from above, or up from the deep. The word is nigh us, even in our mouth and in our heart. We have only to receive God's perfect salvation, already wrought out and finished. It is all very simple. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Nothing could be clearer; nothing more beautiful. "With the heart man **believeth unto righteousness,** and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." What a wonderful gospel! "The **gift** of God is **eternal life,** through Jesus Christ our Lord." Eternal life, mind you! Not temporal, but eternal. Not temporary, but perpetual. Eternal! Everlasting! Not something you get now and lose after a while. Not that, but **life, life, eternal life.** The Good Shepherd, just before giving His life for the sheep, said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them **eternal life;** and they **shall never perish,** neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck out of My Father's hand. I and

My Father are one" (Jno. 10:27-30). There are many persons in the world who will tell you they were once Christians, "but not now." Surely, they could never have received the gift of God, which is **eternal** life. Eternal life is **everlasting**—it lasts **for ever!** No, Christ does not suffer His sheep to perish. He is not a man that He should lie; and His own word is, **"they shall never perish."** The gift is by **faith.** It is unto all and upon all that **believe.** And to **believe,** Scripturally, is to **receive** the Lord Jesus as one's personal Saviour. "He came unto His own, and His own **received** him not. But as many as **received** him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that **believe** on His name" (Jno. 1:11, 12). He that thus **believeth** is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, not because he is a sinner, but **"because he hath not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (Jno. 3:18). Do you ask what you are to believe? The answer is, You must **believe God.** "If we receive the witness of men, the **witness of God** is greater: for this is the **witness of God** which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not **the record that God gave** of His Son. And this is the record: That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that **hath** the

Son **hath** life; and he that **hath not** the Son of God **hath not** life" (1 Jno. 5:9-12). May God Himself help all who read these words to **believe Him!** For to **believe Him** is to obtain His gift of **eternal life,** which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. God's way of bestowing His righteousness upon unrighteous man is by grace through faith. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

8. **"For the Scripture saith"** (11). From this point in the chapter the writer's purpose is evidently the same as in chapter 4, namely, to show that this gospel-righteousness is no new thing; that this justification by faith has always been God's way of salvation. On this point several proof-texts are gathered from the Old Testament: "For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be put to shame (compare Isa. 28:16). For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (vs. 11-13, *R. V.*, compare Joel 2:32).

9. **"How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed?"** (14) At this point the inspired writer anticipates an objection, and again he sets up the imaginary opponent who puts these queries:

"How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of

Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Isa. 52:7). But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? (Isa. 53:1). So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

10. **"But I say, Have they not heard?"** (18). The imaginary opponent having availed himself of Old Testament quotations also, in an attempt to thrust back upon God the responsibility for Israel's failure, the apostle replies in the passage beginning at the 18th verse. We quote from the Revision here:

"But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (Ps. 19:4).

"But I say, Did Israel not know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation, with a nation void of understanding will I anger you (Deut. 32:21).

"And Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I became manifest unto them that asked not of Me (Isa. 65:1).

"But as to Israel He saith, All the day long did I spread out My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Isa. 65:2).

Here are more quotations from the Old Testament, all tending to show that God had warned His chosen people. The first quotation is from the 19th Psalm, and the Holy Spirit's purpose in referring to it is to show that even where the

message of God has not been carried by personal messengers, God has not left Himself without witness. Indeed, the entire Psalm is written to prove precisely that thing.

Nature itself reveals God to man. And that revelation is sufficient to make man responsible to God. Enough of God is revealed to man—every man—to make it his duty to worship the Maker of heaven and earth acording to the measure of that revelation. The revelation through nature is not a small revelation; it is not, as has been said, "the dim light of nature." God declares that by it the invisible things of Him "are clearly seen," even His eternal power and divinity, "so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1: 20).

"The heavens declare the glory of God;
The skies show forth the work of His hands.
Day unto day is pouring out speech,
And night unto night breathing knowledge.
Without speech and without language,
Without their voice being heard,
Into all the earth their sound goes forth,
To the end of the world their words."
(Ps. 19: 1-4, *De Witt's rendering.*)

This Scripture from Ps. 19 bears with crushing force upon the people of Israel. Surely, if the Gentile nations were held responsible before God, how much more the nation of Israel! The oracles of God had been committed to them. They were doubly responsible. Furthermore,

they had been repeatedly warned that if they continued to despise the Word of God, it should go to the Gentiles. The quotations from Moses and Isaiah, cited above, are sufficient proof of this. "Where Israel was groping and failing to find the Messiah, those who sought Him not clearly discerned Him. How can Israel be excused for ignorance of a worldwide gospel, when even the heathen discovered it?" (*Stifler*).

III. ISRAEL'S REJECTION IS NEITHER COMPLETE NOR FINAL (CHAPTER 11).

1. **"I say then, Hath God cast away his people?"** (1). Dr. Stifler says:

"This chapter from the historical point of view is logically necessary. The Old Testament clearly promises Israel headship or leadership in the world's worship. This primacy they had held from the days of Moses until the days of Paul, when the latter became the chief instrument in transferring it to 'another nation' (Mt. 21:43), composed of elect persons called from all peoples (1 Pet. 2:9, 10). This promise of headship was made to Israel not on the ground of their national descent, as the 9th chapter above shows, but, after all, it was a national promise. It belonged to the natural descent, and constituted their 'advantage.' It could not possibly be realized in the church, because the latter knew no racial distinctions. The essence of Judaism was separation from other people. Two facts stood out prominently in Paul's day: first, that the church for the present had displaced Israel in the leadership of God's worship in the world; secondly, that Israel had a promise in their 'oracles' that was not realized in the church and could not be; for the aim of the latter was not

national separation, but diffusion, or, more exactly, election from all nations. The first question Paul has already considered in the 9th and 10th chapters. Israel was justly displaced, and by their own fault. With the second fact the present chapter deals. Israel as a separate people is to be restored and to realize the promises made to them in the Old Testament. God's far-reaching plans in the riches of His wisdom for the salvation of the world are here disclosed, provoking the exultant hymn in verses 33-36. Israel's present failure proves to be the world's wealth now and their own finally" (*Stifler*).

2. **"God forbid!"** (1). This is Paul's wish, that God would forbid and prevent such a thing as the casting away of Israel. They were still "His people," though they were "disobedient and gainsaying."

3. **"For I also am an Israelite"** (1). If Israelites as such were cast off, then Paul would be included; and the fact that he had been saved was a strong argument to show that God had not yet cast away His people which He foreknew (v. 2).

"That Israel has not been forever set aside is the theme of this chapter. (1) The salvation of Paul proves that there is still a remnant (v. 1). (2) The doctrine of the remnant proves it (vs. 2-6). (3) The present national unbelief was foreseen (vs. 7-10). (4) Israel's unbelief is the Gentile opportunity (vs. 11-25). (5) Israel is judicially broken off from the good olive tree, Christ (vs. 17-22). (6) They are to be grafted in again (vs. 23, 24). (7) The promised Deliverer will come out of Zion and the nation will be saved (vs. 25-29). That the Christian now inherits the distinctive Jewish

promises is not taught in Scripture. The Christian is of the heavenly seed of Abraham (Gen. 15: 5, 6; Gal. 3: 29), and partakes of the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15: 18); but Israel as a nation always has its own place, and is yet to have its greatest exaltation as the earthly people of God" (*"Scofield Reference Bible"*).

4. **"Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias?"** (2-4). The reference is to 1 Ki. 19: 10-18. Elijah supposed that he alone of all Israel remained true to God. He was mistaken, for God had preserved a remnant of seven thousand who had not turned aside to Baal worship.

5. **"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace"** (5). Paul himself was a proof of this, as well as the others in Israel who had accepted the Messiah and found salvation in Him.

6. **"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace"** (6). We have quoted the entire verse, the remaining words in the King James Version being spurious. "The 'no more' is not temporal, but logical. Grace and works are mutually exclusive methods. If the remnant was selected on the ground of grace, their legal works had no part whatever in the selection, else the grace would have lost its character as grace" (*Stifler*).

7. **"What then?"** (7). What is the conclusion? This: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." Israel sought for right-

eousness but failed to find it, "because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law" (ch. 9:31, 32).

8. **"But the election hath obtained it"** (7). The elect remnant obtained what the nation as a whole failed to find.

9. **"And the rest were hardened"** (7, *R. V.*). The nation of Israel as such is lying under the judicial chastening of God.

10. **"According as it is written"** (8). The parenthesis here should be omitted, for the closing words of the verse are included in the quotation. The point is that in the Jew's own Scriptures all this had been clearly predicted beforehand; therefore he had been fully warned of the consequence of turning from God.

11. **"God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this very day"** (8, *R. V.*). Isa. 29:10 and Deut. 29:4 are combined in the citation, and the passages should be pondered, with their contexts. The teaching is very solemn. Long-continued abuse of God's grace brought a terrible punishment upon Israel.

The principle is unfolded in Isaiah's dreadful commission (Isa. 6). Let the reader carefully meditate upon that impressive scene. Isaiah had seen a vision of the King, Jehovah of hosts (v. 5). It filled him with horror on account of his own sinful condition, and that of his people.

There is nothing like a look at the Lord Himself to reveal to man his utter uncleanness.

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts."

A seraph thereupon flew unto the prophet, with a live coal from the altar, and, touching his mouth with it, announced the purging and forgiveness of his sins. Then came the voice of the Lord: "Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us?" The prophet answered, "Here am I; send me." Now, carefully observe the precise terms of his commission. We quote from the Revised Version:

"And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed ('continually,' *margin*), but understand not; and see ye indeed ('continually,' *mg.*), but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn again, and be healed."

The horror of the prophet at hearing these terrible words may well be imagined. His agonized query was, "Lord, how long?"

"And he answered, Until cities be waste without inhabitants, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the

land. And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof."

Over and over again this Scripture is quoted in the New Testament and its fulfillment pointed out. In Mt. 13, replying to a query as to why He had begun to teach the people in parables, our Lord replied:

"Because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them.

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not" (Mt. 13: 10-16; compare Mk. 4: 12; Lk. 8: 10).

In Jno. 12: 39 it is declared that certain of our Lord's hearers were unable to believe. The whole passage is in verses 37-41, as bearing upon this point:

"But though He had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the word of Isaiah

the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord. who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? (Isa. 53:1). For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and should turn, and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah, because he saw His glory; and he spake of Him."

The passage is again cited in Ac. 28:26, 27. The connection there also is full of solemn import. Paul had reached Rome in chains, and had called together the leaders among the Jews in that city (v. 17). We quote verses 23-28:

"And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear."

Thus there had come upon Israel to the uttermost the thing that was threatened, the inevitable consequence of hearing the Word of God and doing it not (compare Jas. 1:22-25). And this judicial hardening continues upon Israel "unto **this** very day" also. Although nineteen centuries have come and gone since the epistle to the Romans was written, Israel is still hardened, still far from God, still "a people scattered and peeled," still dispersed and despised, still reckoned "a curse among the nations."

12. **"And David saith"** (9, 10). The Scripture quoted in these two verses is from one of the confessedly Messianic Psalms, the 69th (vs. 22, 23). If anyone doubts that Christ is the theme of this Psalm, let him compare the 9th verse with Jno. 2:17 and Rom. 15:3; the 21st verse with Mt. 27:34, 48; Mk. 15:23; Lk. 23:36; Jno. 19:28-30; the 22d verse with Rom. 11:9, 10; and the 25th verse with Mt. 23:38; Lk. 13:35; Ac. 1:20. The Speaker throughout the 69th Psalm is undoubtedly Christ. At verse 20 He says:

> "Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My food; and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."

This was fulfilled, as we know, on the cross (Jno. 19:28). Then the divine Sufferer goes

on, in the words of verses 22, 23, the words quoted in the passage we are now studying in Romans:

"Let their table before them become a snare; and when they are in peace, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see; and make their loins continually to shake."

Again we have quoted from the Revised Version. The form of the words in Romans is that of the Septuagint, where the passage reads:

"Let their table before them be for a snare, and for a recompense, and for a stumbling-block. Let their eyes be darkened, that they should not see; and bow down their back continually."

"In the word 'table,'" says Dr. Stifler, "there is a picture of men feasting, eating and drinking, unconscious that their enemies are just upon them. The Jew's carnal security while trusting in the law proved his spiritual ruin. But the quotation is poetic, and need not be rigidly defined. 'And bow (Thou) down their back alway' under the heavy legal yoke (Ac. 15:10). The 'alway' does not mean for ever, or the whole discussion concerning Israel must end here. 'Alway,' converted in a few cases by some editors into a phrase, occurs about seven times, and means continuously or without interruption (Lk. 24:53; Heb. 13:15). It is not an indefinite, but a limited term, limited by the circumstances of which it speaks."

13. **"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?"** (11). That they have fallen cannot be denied; but is this the end? Has Israel no future in God's purpose? Must we conclude that, since Israel has been unfaithful to God, therefore God will be unfaithful to Israel? Shall He forget His covenant? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Israel has stumbled, and fallen. Is this the end?

14. **"God forbid!"** (11). This is not the final outcome of their history. God had a purpose even in their stumbling and fall, and that purpose was a gracious and benign one. **"Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles."** And even this was not for the sake of the Gentiles only, for it was in God's mind by this means **"to provoke them** (that is, the Jews) **to jealousy."** "Emulation" stands for the same Greek word in verse 14, and is to be preferred, notwithstanding the action of the Revisers in using "jealousy" in both verses. *Parazeloo* is, literally, "to stimulate alongside," and its force here is "to excite to rivalry" (*Strong*). The same word occurs in Rom. 10: 19 and 1 Cor. 10: 22. Dr. Moule calls attention, in connection with this chapter to "the divine benignity which lurks even under the edges of the cloud of judgment." Continuing, he says:

"And observe, too, thus close to the passage which has put before us the mysterious side of divine action on human wills, the daylight simplicity of this side of that action; the loving skill with which the world's blessing is meant by the grace of God to act, exactly in the line of human feeling, upon the will of Israel.

"But would that 'the Gentiles' had borne more in heart that last short sentence of St. Paul through these long centuries since the apostles fell asleep! It is one of the most marked, as it is one of the saddest, phenomena in the history of the church, that for ages, almost from the days of St. John himself, we look in vain either for any appreciable Jewish element in Christendom, or for any extended effort on the part of Christendom to win Jewish hearts to Christ by a wise and loving evangelization. With only relatively insignificant exceptions this was the abiding state of things till well within the eighteenth century, when the German Pietists began to call the attention of believing Christians to the spiritual needs and prophetic hopes of Israel, and to remind them that the Jews were not only a beacon of judgment, or only the most impressive and awful illustration of the fulfilment of prophecy, but the bearers of the yet unfulfilled predictions of mercy for themselves and for the world. Meanwhile, all through the Middle Age, and through generations of preceding and following time also, Christendom did little for Israel but retaliate, reproach, and tyrannize. It was so of old in England: witness the fires of York. It is so in this day in Russia, and where the 'Judenhetze' inflames innumerable hearts in central Europe.

"No doubt there is more than one side to the persistent phenomena. There is a side of mystery; the permissive sentence of the Eternal has to do with the long affliction, however caused, of the people which once uttered the fatal cry, 'His blood be on us, and on our children!' (Mat. 27:25). And the wrong-doings of Jews, beyond a doubt, have often made a dark occasion for a 'Jew-hatred,' on a larger or narrower scale. But all this leaves unaltered, from the point of view of the gospel, the sin of Christendom in its tremendous failure to seek, in love, the good of erring Israel. It leaves as black as ever the guilt of every

fierce retaliation upon Jews by so-called Christians, of every slanderous belief about Jewish creed or life, of every unjust anti-Jewish law ever passed by Christian king or senate. It leaves an undiminished responsibility upon the church of Christ, not only for the flagrant wrong of having too often animated and directed the civil power in its oppressions of Israel, and not only for having so often neglected to seek the evangelization of Israel by direct appeals for the true Messiah, and by an open setting forth of His glory, but for the deeper and more subtle wrong, persistently inflicted from age to age, in a most guilty unconsciousness—the wrong of having failed to manifest Christ to Israel through the living holiness of Christendom. Here, surely, is the very point of the apostle's thought in the sentence before us: 'Salvation to the Gentiles, to move the Jews to jealousy.' In his inspired idea, Gentile Christendom, in Christ, was to be so pure, so beneficent, so happy, finding manifestly in its Messianic Lord such resources for both peace of conscience and a life of noble love, love above all directed towards opponents and traducers, that Israel, looking on, with eyes however purblind with prejudice, should soon see a moral glory in the church's face impossible to be hid, and be drawn as by a moral magnet to the church's hope. Is it the fault of God (may He pardon the formal question, if it lacks reverence), or the fault of man, man carrying the Christian name, that facts have been so woefully otherwise in the course of history? It is the fault, the grievous fault of us Christians. The narrow prejudice, the iniquitous law, the rigid application of exaggerated ecclesiastical principle, all these things have been man's perversion of the divine idea, to be confessed and deplored in a deep and interminable repentance. May the mercy of God awaken Gentile Christendom, in a manner and degree as yet unknown, to remember this our indefeasible debt to this people, everywhere present with us, everywhere

distinct from us;—the debt of a life, personal and ecclesiastical, so manifestly pure and loving in our Lord the Christ as to move them to the jealousy which shall claim Him again for their own. Then we shall indeed be hastening the day of full and final blessing, both for themselves and for the world" (*Handley C. G. Moule*).

15. **"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, . . . how much more their fullness?"** (12-15). Everything worth while has come to the Gentile world through Israel. If such blessing has come through their stumbling and falling, far greater blessing is to come through their return to their own place in God's love and favor. Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, sought to stir his own kinsmen to emulation, for only through Israel's recovery is the world-wide blessing to come. Their casting away has brought reconciliation to Gentiles, but their own reconciliation will be as **"life from the dead."** It is ever God's plan to bless the world through the Jew. In His own time,

"He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. 27:6).

It is to this nation that the prophet calls, saying,

"Arise, shine; for **thy** light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but Jehovah shall arise upon **thee,** and His glory shall be seen upon **thee.** And the Gentiles shall come to **thy** light, and kings to the brightness of **thy** rising (resurrection from the dead!)" (Isa. 60:1-3).

This is the order everywhere in the Scriptures of God. Israel must first come into the blessing,

and then the Gentiles. Hear God's nation sing, in the 67th Psalm:

"God be merciful to **us**, and bless **us**; and cause His face to shine upon **us**; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy salvation **among all nations.** . . . God shall bless **us**; and **all the ends of the earth** shall fear Him."

16. **"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches"** (16). Numbers 15:21 interprets the former of these two figures. A handful of dough was presented to God as a token of the lump from which it was taken. By the firstfruit here Paul means the saved Jewish remnant, including himself and all believers in Israel. By the lump he means the whole nation. The root, strictly speaking, is Abraham (Gal. 3:29), and the natural branches are his descendants according to the flesh through Isaac and Jacob, "the heirs with him of the same promise."

17. **"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches"** (17-24). In this discussion the point is that just as the nation of Israel through unbelief has temporarily lost its place of primacy and favor in the counsels of God, exactly so shall the Gentile peoples, if they believe not, be also cast aside. Men do not graft wild branches into good trees. God has acted **"contrary to nature"** in bringing salvation to

Gentiles. To bring salvation to His own covenant people, which He will surely do in due time, will be a perfectly logical proceeding. And **"God is able."**

18. **"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery"** (25-27). The Spirit of God here whispers a secret into the ear of the church of God—a revelation concerning God's eternal purpose for His beloved ancient people. Lest we **"should be wise"** in our **"own conceits,"** God would have us to know **"that blindness** (a hardening, *R. V.*) **in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."** The reader's attention is directed to the comments on verses 7-10, above. Observe, in addition, that the blindness, or hardening, is neither complete or final. It is not complete, for it is only **"in part."** A remnant in Israel is turning to the Messiah (verse 5, above). And it is not final, for it is only **"until"** the church is complete, "which is His body, the fulness of Him" (Eph. 1:22, 23).

19. **"And so all Israel shall be saved"** (26, 27). The difficulty connected with these verses, which has given so much concern to commentators, will disappear when the punctuation is corrected. The statement is clear enough when we read, **"And so all Israel shall be saved as it is written."** Everything is bound to come to pass "as it is written." The Scriptures are emphatic in predicting that a time is coming when God will save the nation of Israel as such. Not a

remnant, but the whole nation then living shall be converted and saved. This does not touch the case of Israelites who die in this present age rejecting the salvation of God, but it covers the whole nation that shall be left upon the earth at the time when the great blessing comes. All this will be brought about, of course, by the Lord Jesus Christ. He it is that **"shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."** He has already come as the Redeemer, the Goel, "to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob" (Isa. 59:20); but the nation refused to receive Him. Yet "the foundation of God standeth sure," and "all Israel shall be saved as it is written." He has not forgotten His promise, and in due time He will fulfill it in every jot and tittle. **"For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."** Let us look at the terms of His covenant unto them:

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith Jehovah: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Isreal; After those days, saith Jehovah, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah: **for they shall ALL know Me, from the least of**

them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will **forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"** (Jer. 31:31-35).

20. **"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes** (28-31). The Jews have rejected the gospel, and that puts them in the place of God's enemies for the time being. Let the Gentiles take advantage of the opportunity; this is preeminently the Gentiles' day. Let them not forget, though, that Israel is still an elect nation, and that to the fathers God made great and sure promises. **"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."** Having bestowed "gifts and calling" upon Israel, God will never take those gifts or that calling back; they are theirs for ever; he does not change. The Gentiles have by their disobedience brought upon themselves the mercy of God; and just so shall the children of Israel by their disobedience bring upon themselves the mercy of God.

21. **"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief"** (32). The Revision is to be preferred here: **"For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all."**

"His whole action with both Jew and Gentile comes to this, that He 'hath concluded (locked up as in a prison), them all in unbelief (with this grand purpose), that He might have mercy upon all.' There is nothing richer than His mercy. If the Jews, for instance, had obeyed Him, they could have experienced only His fidelity. Mercy, which wholly excludes privi-

lege or merit, is the grand idea (Eph. 2:4, 5). The Jew will find his gifts and calling, but they come to Him as a matter of mercy—mercy that excludes 'boasting' (3:27).

"Authorities are divided on the meaning of 'all.' It certainly does not refer to the elect; the whole context forbids that. But does it mean all men, all individuals (*Meyer, Alford*), or all nations, the Jews and the Gentiles about whom Paul has been speaking? The context is decisive for the latter. This general principle, as some have failed to notice, describes God's attitude toward men, and not the outcome of that attitude. It does not contradict other plain Scriptures by teaching universal salvation, or salvation without faith. 'The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that *believe*' (Gal. 3: 22). The principle says nothing about the outcome of the divine mercy toward all. It simply declares that God has actively and directly locked up all in sin so that he may have mercy toward all; and that if they are saved they are saved by mercy.

"This is the final and complete explanation of the Jew's fall. He was by nature a sinner: God hedged that nature about with a rigid law to show him what his real character was. He tried to find liberty within its iron bars, but gets only slavery. Mercy alone can deliver him.

"The Gentile in Paul's day had no law, but sought liberty in wisdom, his own wisdom (1:21, 22), and in his quest became a fool and a slave to his lust. God knows that man cannot save himself, that no form of civil government and no system of ethics, even though it be that of the Old or of the New Testament, can attain to liberty. But man does not know it; he is in the rough prison, shut up under sin to learn it, to learn that salvation cannot be reached by human effort, that

it comes down from God, the absolute gift of His mercy.

"This divine purpose of mercy is not only the explanation of the Jew's fall, but of the continuance of the world in sin. It is the key to those terrible first chapters of the epistle. Universal condemnation leads to the universal principle of mercy. And what Paul saw in his world-wide view in his day, is still sadly true. The nations are in sin; Israel still refuses the Christ. The lesson of sin's prison-house is not yet learned; but what the elect have found out all along—that there is no hope in themselves—the nations will learn in due time, and man's works will cease, and God's principle of mercy toward all will bring salvation. God now elects men from both Jew and Gentile; Jew and Gentile will then elect God. This thirty-second verse is the climax of the epistle" (*Stifler*).

22. **"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"** (33-36). Here the chapter, and the section, closes with a song of praise to God. **"How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"** It is only as He reveals Himself that we can know Him at all (Compare Job 5:9; 11:7; 15:8). **"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?"** (Isa. 40:13, 14). **"Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?"** (Job 35:7; 41:1). **"For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen."**

FOURTH MAIN DIVISION: THE CHRISTIAN WALK

(Chapter 12:1 to 15:13)

The strictly doctrinal portion of our epistle ends with the 11th chapter, and the remainder is occupied chiefly with exhortations to a Christian walk in accordance with what has been taught. This is ever the Holy Spirit's way, as seen throughout the Scriptures. Doctrine determines duty. Creed characterizes conduct. What a man really believes is revealed by what he does. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

This method of teaching is illustrated in Eph. 5:8, where it is written, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." The doctrine precedes the exhortation, and furnishes the basis for it. And so it is in the closing section of Romans: these hortatory chapters are the outgrowth of the wonderful teaching of the preceding doctrinal ones. Here we shall find the whole ground of Christian life fully covered. First of all, the life must be yielded to God, and He must be in full possession (12:1, 2). This is fundamental, and without it the Christian life cannot be normal. But let this point be settled—settled right, and once

for all—and great fruitfulness and blessing will result.

I. The Living Sacrifice (12:1, 2).

1. **"I beseech you"** (1). The verb here is *parakaleo,* from **Paraclete,** the Holy Spirit's title so often translated "Comforter." It is also applied to the Lord Jesus as our "Advocate" (1 Jno. 2:1). The verb itself is frequently found in the New Testament, and is variously translated, "beseech," "call for," "comfort," "desire," "exhort," "intreat," and "pray." It is a strong word, hard to render into English. But the Spirit uses it here, in seeking to induce His people to fully yield themselves to Him. It is as if God Himself were on His knees before His people, if we may so speak, begging them to once and for all give themselves over to Him, and thus enter into the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

2. **"Therefore"** (1). This word calls attention to all that has preceded it in the epistle. Doubtless, the special connection is with the argument which ends with the 8th chapter, the theodicy of chapters 9 to 11 being parenthetical; and yet it may well be that even those chapters were also in the writer's mind as he wrote the "therefore." The practical exhortations which are to follow are based upon the doctrines already set forth. "What the eye is in the body, that faith is to the soul, and the knowledge

of divine things. Yet it has need of practical virtue, as the eye has need of hands and feet and the other parts of the body. And therefore the divine apostle in his doctrinal argument subjoins ethical instruction also" (*Theodoret*).

3. **"Brethren"** (1). It is a message for the brethren, and not for the unbeliever. Let no one distort this passage into a gospel text. The unsaved sinner cannot give himself to God, and if he could the offering would not be acceptable. The only thing for a lost man to do is to receive the Lord Jesus as his personal Saviour. After that is done, he may speak of making an offering.

4. **"By the mercies of God"** (1). The mercies of God are surely exhibited in the gospel, as so graphically portrayed in the preceding chapters of our epistle. "By these very facts, he says, I beseech you, by which ye were saved: as if any one wishing to make an impression on one who had received great benefits, were to bring his benefactor himself to supplicate him" (*Chrysostom*).

5. **"That ye present your bodies"** (1). The verb is connected with sacrifice. "Present," says Dr. Stifler, "is a temple term for the bringing thither of anything to God. So Jesus was presented (Lk. 2:22), and so Paul would present each believer (Col. 1:28). He entreats the Romans to make themselves a sacrificial offering to God. The word 'present' occurs first in the epistle at 6:13, a verse which this chapter now

unfolds. It is there translated 'yield.' 'Bodies' is the comprehensive term for the whole man, body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5: 23). It is equivalent to 'yourselves,' but better suited than the latter word to Paul's sacrificial idea."

6. **"A living sacrifice"** (1). The sacrificial victims under the old covenant were slain. But since the one sacrifice for all has been accomplished on Calvary there is no further need of dead sacrifices. What God wants is that we make a present of ourselves to Him, as living sacrifices, putting ourselves into His hand, for His pleasure.

7. **"Holy"** (1). We are "holy brethren" (Heb. 3: 1), by reason of the substitutionary sacrificial work of the Son of God on our behalf; "we are sanctified (made holy) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10: 10).

8. **"Acceptable unto God"** (1). How wonderful it is that we are permitted and enabled to make an acceptable offering, who were once "sinners of the Gentiles!" The glory for it all belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ; we are "accepted in the Beloved, in Whom we have redemption through His blood" (Eph. 1: 6, 7).

9. **"Which is your reasonable service"** (1). The adjective here is "logical." Alford renders it "rational," and remarks that it "is opposed to carnal or fleshly (see Heb. 7: 16)." So Chrysostom: "having in it nothing corporeal, nothing

gross, nothing subject to sense." The contrast is between the fleshly sacrifices of Judaism and the "spiritual sacrifices" of the new dispensation (compare 1 Pet. 2:5; Jno. 4:23, 24).

10. **"And be not conformed to this age: but be ye transfigured"** (2). The two verbs used here, usually translated "conformed" and "transformed," are radically different from each other:

(1) The former is from *suschematizo,* "to fashion alike" (*Strong*), or "to become like-shaped" (*H. A. W. Meyer*). To be conformed to this age is to yield oneself to it, following the line of least resistance, as jelly in a mould, until one becomes like the age, having given up "the good fight of faith." Thus Demas forsook Paul, "having loved this present age" (2 Tim. 4:10), and forgot Him "Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4). The word translated "conformed" is rendered in 1 Pet. 1:14, "fashioning yourselves according."

(2) On the other hand, the word translated "transformed" is from *metamorphoo,* which gives us our English word "metamorphosis," and means literally "transfigured." The same Greek word is used in the gospel accounts of the transfiguration on the mount (see Mt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2). Our Lord's transfiguration did not result from outward conditions, but rather from an unveiling of that which was within. So we are

called upon here to "be transfigured." Quite a different word is rendered "transform" in 2 Cor. 11 : 13-15, where Satan and his agents are said to be transformed into angels and messengers of light and righteousness. The word there is *metaschematizo,* and is defined by Strong as meaning "to disguise." The same word reads "transferred" in 1 Cor. 4 : 6—"These things.... I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes."

11. **"By the renewing of your mind"** (2). "Renewing" occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament. In Tit. 3 : 5 it is written, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." This "renewing" is not our work, but the Spirit's. We are not called upon to renew our minds in order that we may be transfigured: we are only to yield ourselves unto God, and He does all the rest. In other words, as Alford puts it, "the **renewing of your mind** is not the instrument by which, but the **manner in which** the metamorphosis takes place: that wherein it consists." The process is set forth clearly enough in 2 Cor. 3 : 18, where it is written, "But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transfigured (*metamorphoumetha*) into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (*Improved Version*).

12. **"That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"** (2). The R. V. marginal rendering here is: "that ye may prove what is the will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect." "Prove" here has the force of "discern" or "recognize."

Dr. Stifler warns us to

"beware of the chapter mark which cuts off these two verses from what precedes, as if an entirely new thought were taken up with chapter 12. These two verses are intimately connected with the summing up at the close of chapter 11. That summary led Paul to adoring worship as he viewed God's wide-reaching plans. And the idea of these two verses is worship evoked and provoked by the same view. The Romans are to present themselves for a rational service, a worship in which the spiritual reason leads. This worship is impossible except by men dissevered from conformity to the world. He who is ruled by the world's spirit and pursuits, to whom the world is the only great thing, cannot worship. The spring of the worship, as well as its power, is just what it was in Paul, a mind that discerns God's will in the dispensational ordering of the world to bring about its ultimate salvation (see Eph. 3: 14-21), a mind that sees that will as good and acceptable and perfect. When the corner-stone of creation was laid, all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38: 6, 7); and he, too, will worship, who sees the corner-stone laid by God in Christ for the new creation. It takes mind (v. 2) to know mind (11: 34). These two mentions of the word look each other in the face across the chapter bar, and man's mind in its mortal activity never acts normally except in adoring worship. 'Present your bodies' is the first step. 'That ye may prove the will' is then, first of

all, His will in Christ for the redeeming of the nations, Jew and Gentile. And only as this will is known can any one see how he is himself to act. The renewed mind dwelling on the sublime purposes of God gains an increasing delicacy of discernment of its own moral action, and is prepared for personal guidance in all questions of duty and living, and to occupy spiritual offices acceptably. It is at this point that Paul branches off on duties. The qualification to discharge them is a knowledge of God's ways."

II. The Yielded Life in Service (12:3-8).

1. **"For I say"** (3). The apostle speaks with authority, "through the grace (i. e., the gift) given unto" him.

2. **"To every man"** (3). "He says it not to this person or that person only, but to ruler and ruled, to bond and free, to simple and wise, to woman and man" (*Chrysostom.*)

3. **"Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think"** (3). "There is a play on the words here in the original, which can only be clumsily conveyed in another language: 'not to be highminded, above that which he ought to be minded, but to be so minded as to be soberminded'" (*Alford*).

4. **"According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith"** (3). Reference is made here to the differing gifts for service in the church which is the body of Christ. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18).

5. **"We....are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another"** (5). This is illustrated in verse 4, as in 1 Cor. 12:12, by the human body, which, though it is one body, has many members with differing functions.

6. **"Having then gifts"** (6-8). As these gifts differ "according to the grace that is given to us," that is according to the will of God Who bestows the gifts, we are to minister, each one according to his own gift and place in the body. There are seven gifts enumerated (compare Eph. 4:8-12; 1 Cor. 12:28). The seven gifts are named in order in this passage, and believers are here exhorted, each to minister according to his own gift from God by the Spirit:

(1) **"Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith"** (6). The New Testament prophet is one that "speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3). A prophet is a forth-teller of the mind of God. The Old Testament prophets were called upon to do this apart from the written Word, for the Word of God was not yet complete; but, now that the Scriptures are finished, the prophet of God speaks according to that which is written. To be a prophet is a high privilege, and this gift is the first named here. In 1 Cor. 14:1 we are exhorted to "follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." It is a great thing to be a mouthpiece for the Spirit of God. Yet this must

be done within certain well-defined limits: the prophet must "prophesy according to the proportion of faith." Dr. Stifler says that "faith does not mean here body of doctrine. It is the prophet's own personal trust. There was dealt to him a measure of faith (verse 3 above) for this work. God gave him an insight into the gospel of Christ. Let his prophecy not go beyond that and become vainglorious and arrogant. Men who have an office are under strong temptation to go beyond what they know in it. Thus they greatly injure themselves in coming to believe the utterances of their own ignorance, and they mislead others, who believe them because they are accredited teachers. Let the prophet rigidly limit his gift by the faith of his gift."

(2) **"Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering"** (7, *R. V.*). Preachers are often spoken of as "**the** ministry," as if they were the only ministers in the church. In a very true sense the whole church is a body of ministers, for the word means a servant. The passage here reads, *"eite diakonian, en te diakonia,"*—"if service, in the service." But, it may be observed that the Greek word for servant is the word for deacon; and possibly the office of deacon is in view here. Let them be occupied with their diaconate, that is, their ministry or service. In connection with the word, "ministry," it is interesting to note the change made by the Revisers in Eph. 4: 11, 12, where the purpose of the risen Christ in bestow-

ing gifts upon His church is set forth. The King James Version reads:

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"

These persons are what the modern church calls "the ministry." They are only Christ's gifts bestowed upon "the church which is His body," for a very definite purpose; namely, according to the common Version:

"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

This is confusing, for it seems to separate "the ministry" into a class distinct from "the saints." Now observe the Revised rendering of the passage:

"And He gave some *to be* apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ."

Still clearer is the 1911 Bible:

"And he hath given some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; UNTO THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE DOING OF SERVICE, for the building up of the body of Christ."

(3) **"Or he that teacheth, on teaching"** (7). The gift to teach is necessarily in some degree

included in the gift of prophecy. The teacher is an expounder of the Word of God. Let him expound that Word "according to the proportion of faith." Let him "teach in the sphere, within the bounds, of the teaching allotted to him by God, or for which God has given him the faculty" (*Alford*).

(4) **"Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation"** (8). A most interesting word is this: *"eite ho parakalon, en te paraklesei."* Notice here that the root word for Paraclete is used. The same word in its verb form is translated "beseech" in the first verse of our chapter. Within limitations, the exhorter is to be a paraclete or comforter to his fellow-believers. This gift also is closely connected with the gift to prophesy. In 1 Cor. 14:31 it is written:

"For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted (Gk., *parakalontai*)."

In 1 Tim. 4:13 the gift of teaching is linked with that of exhortation:

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation (*paraklesei*), to doctrine" (*didaskalia,* translated "teaching" in Rom. 12:7).

(5) **"He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity"** (8). Some have supposed that this refers to those who were appointed in the church for the giving of alms to the poor, while others hold that it includes those who give money to the

church for the support of the gospel. In any case, the principle is the same. For "simplicity" the Revision reads "liberality;" the Greek is "singleness" (compare Mt. 6:22; Lk. 11:34; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22).

(6) **"He that ruleth, with diligence"** (8). "This," declares Dr. Stifler, "is a faulty rendering. The apostolic church had no rulers. It ought to be, 'He that presides' or 'superintends.' Paul may have referred in this term to their elders (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17)." Dean Alford says: **"He that ruleth or presideth—** but over what? If over the church exclusively, we come back to offices again: and it is hardly likely that the rulers of the church, as such, would be introduced so low down in the list, or by so very general a term, as this. In 1 Tim. 3: 4, 5, 12, we have the verb used of **presiding over a man's own household:** and in its absolute usage here, I do not see why that also should not be included." Mr. Grant has a helpful note. He says: "Next, we have 'He that ruleth' or 'He that leadeth.' The leader is of necessity, to a large extent, the ruler also, but there is no absolute rule, except that of the Spirit, in the church of God; but he that realizes that he is leading others has, of necessity, much responsibility attaching to this. If his word is weighty, he must be the more careful. The apostle says here, he must rule or lead 'with diligence,' that is, not careless of what he is doing, not at random, but

as giving thought and care to that which is having effect upon the minds of others."

(7) **"He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness"** (8). The word "mercy" as used here has no reference to sins, nor to the forgiveness of sins. The reference is to those in the church having a special gift to aid those who are in trouble. Let them do it "with cheerfulness," for it is a glad service. Perhaps this is the gift of "helps" mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:28.

III. The Yielded Life in Fellowship (12:9-16a).

1. **"Let love be without dissimulation"** (9). The Revision reads, "without hypocrisy," and others translate, "Let love be unfeigned." Love is not love unless it be real. This exhortation comes first in the paragraph on Christian communion, for love is the basis of all real fellowship in the body of Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is, first of all, love (Gal. 5:22).

2. **"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good"** (9). The love of evil and the love of good are mutually exclusive passions. Therefore, "ye that love Jehovah, hate evil" (Ps. 97:10). If ye would "learn to do well," then ye must "cease to do evil" (Isa. 1:16, 17). Good and evil are two masters which no man can serve together (Mt. 6:24). Let us not fail to observe the connection in which we find this exhortation; it is preceded and followed by words

about love. Our love for one another, then, is not to blind us to the evil that we may see in one another. We are to abhor the evil, even while loving the person in whom we may find the evil. And in such a case we shall be the more faithful in seeking to deliver the person from the evil that entangles him and help him to cleave to that which is good.

3. **"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love"** (10). Weymouth reads here, "As for brotherly love, be affectionate to one another." It is not enough to love: we ought to demonstrate the love we have toward one another. "Demonstrativeness" is hateful when true affection is absent; but where love abides it ought to manifest itself.

4. **"In honor preferring one another"** (10). This is true humility, or meekness, always the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). In Eph. 5:18-21 the Spirit-filled church is seen, with the members submitting themselves "one to another in the fear of Christ" (*R. V.*). William Wye Smith's Scotch New Testament has it: "And be-na ye fou' wi' wine, in whilk is riot; but be ye fou' o' the Spirit, speakin' amang yersels in psalms and hymns, and godly sangs, liltin' and makin' music i' yere hearts till the Lord, at a' times giean thanks for a' things, i' the name o' oor Lord Jesus Christ, till yere God and Faither. Pittin' yersels aneath ane anither, in the fear o' Christ." There is no power in the universe that can produce a

picture like that but the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

5. **"Not slothful in business"** (11). A wrong translation! The Revisers render the phrase, "In diligence not slothful." So also, Young, the Englishman's Greek New Testament, Grant, and many other translators. Darby reads, "As to diligent zealousness, not slothful." Weymouth's rendering is, "Do not be indolent when zeal is required." This is somewhat paraphrastic, but it probably hits upon the true meaning of the passage.

6. **"Fervent in spirit"** (11). Lukewarmness has no place in the Christian life (Rev. 3:15, 16). It is "the effectual **fervent** prayer of a righteous man" that "availeth much" (Jas. 5:16).

7. **"Serving the Lord"** (11). This is the climax of all that precedes in the entire chapter. Moffatt puts the whole of the 11th verse thus: "Never let your zeal flag; maintain the spiritual glow; serve the Lord."

8. **"Rejoicing in hope"** (12). "Rejoicing in **the** hope" is how it is written in the Greek. What is referred to is "the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23), the "blessed hope" of our Lord's return (Tit. 2:11-13).

9. **"Patient in tribulation"** (12). This we had in the 5th chapter, with the basis for it. The Christian is able to glory in tribulation: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and pa-

tience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

10. **"Continuing instant in prayer"** (12). For "instant," read "steadfastly" (*R. V.*). This entire verse also ought to be read together. Conybeare and Howson translate it: "In your hope be joyful; in your sufferings be steadfast; in your prayers be unwearied."

11. **"Distributing to the necessity of saints"** (13). "Distributing" is better than the Revisers' "communicating;" but the 1911 Bible is better than either: "contributing to the necessities of the saints." We are to share what we have with one another and thus relieve each other's needs (Heb. 13:16).

12. **"Given to hospitality"** (13). The Greek is "pursuing hospitality"—running after it. We have here not the usual word for "given," and it is not elsewhere in the New Testament so translated. We have the same English expression, "given to hospitality," in 1 Tim. 3:2, but in the original it is merely "hospitable"—*philoxenon,* literally, fond of guests. But in the passage now before us in Rom. 12:13 it is "hospitality pursuing"—*philoxenian diokentes,* literally, running after a fondness for guests—addicted to hospitality as to a strong habit. It is a fine old habit, all the sweeter as it becomes rarer. Let us "be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby

some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2; Gen. 18:3; 19:2).

13. **"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not"** (14). This is the principle of Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:28; 1 Cor. 4:12. Unnatural, and impossible, except by the power of the Holy Spirit; but this is the way of blessedness.

14. **"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"** (15). This is true sympathy, or fellow-feeling. It is often more natural to weep with weeping ones than to rejoice with rejoicing ones, for this latter form of sympathy is frequently hindered by envy; but in "the church which is His body," the organism consisting of His born-again ones, the indwelling Holy Spirit, when unhindered, always produces sympathy among the members of the body; "and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).

15. **"Be of the same mind one toward another"** (16). The thought is closely connected with that which precedes it. Weymouth translates: "Have full sympathy with one another." Darby: "Have the same respect one for another." Moffatt: "Keep in harmony with one another."

16. **"Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate** (16). "Condescend" is rejected by Stifler as an unfortunate word: "Condescension has no place in the church. Some

render, 'be carried away with' the lowly—give yourself to them. The world neglects and despises them; Christ loves them and died for them. There is often more genuine worth and manhood in the alleys than in the avenues; and Christian love goes where love is most needed. It is 'carried away' in the service of need. Christ in help to one lowly woman was so 'carried away' that He had no desire to eat (Jno. 4:31, 32)." The 1911 Bible reads: "Set not your mind on high things, but go along with the lowly." Wakefield has it: "Set not your mind on high things, but be guided by humility."

IV. The Yielded Life in Relation to the World (12:16b-21).

1. **"Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil"** (16, 17). This is quoted from Prov. 3:7, which, according to the Septuagint version, reads: "Be not wise in thine own conceit; but fear God, and depart from evil." Rotherham, in the Romans citation, reads: "Be not getting presumptuous in your own opinion: unto one evil for evil rendering." In 1 Pet. 3:9 it is written: "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

2. **"Provide things honest in the sight of all men"** (17). This intensely important word, repeated in effect in 2 Cor. 8:21, and elsewhere

often insisted upon, is another Old Testament quotation, being from Prov. 3:4, in the Septuagint.

3. **"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"** (18). This is closely connected with what follows. Dr. Young gives the whole paragraph thus: "If possible —so far as in you—with all men being in peace; not avenging yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath, for it hath been written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will recompense again, saith the Lord;' if, then, thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he doth thirst, give him drink; for this doing, coals of fire thou shalt heap upon his head; be not overcome by the evil, but overcome, in the good, the evil." The first part of the quotation is from Deut. 32:35 and is cited again in Heb. 10:30. The remainder of the passage is from Prov. 25:21, 22. "He who cannot be moved from the basis of love," says Dr. Stifler, "is a victor even though he cannot win his enemy. To win himself is a much greater triumph."

Now let the reader look back over this marvellous chapter. It is full of impossibilities from the natural standpoint, yet it is the practical, normal Christian life. Victory comes through a definite yielding of the body into God's hands as a living sacrifice. This is indeed our "reasonable service." Here is where world-conformity ends and heavenly transfiguration begins. Thus, and thus only, is the goal to be reached—the goal

of triumph. Thus, and only thus, can God's child avoid being overcome of evil. Thus only can he overcome evil with good.

V. The Yielded Life in Relation to Civil Government (13: 1-7).

1. **"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers"** (1). "It has been well observed," says Alford, "that some special reason must have given occasion to these exhortations. We can hardly attribute it to the seditious spirit of the Jews at Rome, as their influence in the Christian church there would not be great; indeed, from Acts 28 the two seem to have been remarkably distinct. But disobedience to the civil authorities may have arisen from mistaken views among the Christians themselves as to the nature of Christ's kingdom, and its relation to existing powers of this world. And such mistakes would naturally be rifest there, where the fountain of earthly power was situated: and there also best and most effectually met by these precepts coming from apostolic authority. The way for them is prepared by verses 17 ff. of the foregoing chapter. 1 Pet. 2: 13 ff. is parallel." The word for "be subject" is more literally rendered, "submit himself." And the exhortation is for **"every soul:"** on which Dr. Stifler remarks that "none is exempt, not even the pope."

2. **"For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God"** (1). The

word for "power" throughout this passage is *exousia,* and refers to civil governmental authority. "Civil government has its source in God, and all constituted power is appointed and ordained by him. The cruel abuses in government are no necessary part of them and do not invalidate their divine charter any more than the abuses of marriage rob it of its sacredness. Any government is preferable to anarchy, just as poorly enforced marriage laws are better than none. Man abuses all God's gifts" (*Stifler*).

3. **"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God"** (2). The writers have labored hard and long over this sentence. Dr. Stifler says that teaching and agitation for better government is not forbidden here "if these do not lead to resistance, but under this principle it is hard to see how a Christian can lead in a rebellion. Paul's words are unmistakable, and yet there stand Cromwell and Washington!" H. A. W. Meyer says that "Paul has certainly expressed the divine right of magistracy, which Christian princes specially designate by the expression 'by the grace of God' (since the time of Louis the Pious). And *ai de ousai,* **the extant,** actually **existing,** allows no exception such as that possibly of tyrants or usurpers (in opposition to Reiche). The Christian, according to Paul, ought to regard any magistracy whatever, provided its rule over him subsists *de facto,* as divinely ordained, since it has not come into exist-

ence without the operation of God's will; and this applies also to tyrannical or usurped power, although such a power, in the counsel of God, is perhaps destined merely to be temporary and transitional. From this point of view, the Christian obeys not the human caprice and injustice, but the will of God, who—in connection with His plan of government inaccessible to human insight—has presented even the unworthy and unrighteous ruler as the *ousa exousia* (the **existing** authority—the power that **is**), and has made him the instrument of His measures. Questions as to special cases—such as how the Christian is to conduct himself in political catastrophes, what magistracy he is to look upon in such times as the *ousa exousia,* as also, how he, if the command of the magistrate is against the command of God, is at any rate to obey God rather than men (Ac. 5:29), etc.—Paul here leaves unnoticed, and only gives the main injunction of obedience. By no means, however, are we to think only of the magisterial **office** as instituted by God (*Chrysostom, Oecumenius, and others*), but rather of the magistracy in its concrete persons and members as the bearers of the divinely ordained office." Dean Alford observes "that the apostle here pays no regard to the question of the duty of Christions in revolutionary movements. His precepts regard an **established power,** be it what it may. **It,** in all matters lawful, we are bound to obey. But even the parental power does not extend to

things unlawful. If the civil power commands us to violate the law of God, we must obey God before man. If it commands us to disobey the common laws of humanity, or the sacred institutions of our country, our obedience is due to the higher and more general law, rather than to the lower and particular. These distinctions must be drawn by the wisdom granted to Christians in the varying circumstances of human affairs; they are all only subordinate portions of the great duty of **obedience to law.** To obtain, by lawful means, the removal or alteration of an unjust or unreasonable law, is another part of this duty: for all authorities among men must be in accord with the highest authority, the moral sense. But even where law is hard and unreasonable, not **disobedience,** but **legitimate protest,** is the duty of the Christian."

4. **"And they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment"** (2). The King James Version's "damnation" here is far too strong. The Revisers' word, "judgment," is to be preferred above "condemnation;" for, although God may judge a Christian, He cannot condemn him. The thought is precisely parallelled in 1 Cor. 11:29-32, where Christians are exhorted to take heed how they partake of the Lord's Supper:

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly

among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

The teaching here, then, is that God Himself will deal with those who resist the authority of civil government. In resisting "the powers that be," they are resisting Him; and they "shall receive to themselves judgment" from Him. The judgment may come through the powers, but it is from God, nevertheless.

5. **"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil"** (3). Tholuck and others infer from this verse that Paul wrote the epistle prior to the terrible persecutions of the Christians during Nero's reign; and Alford thinks that had this been otherwise, the **principle** stated by the apostle would have been the same, though he could hardly have passed so apparent an exception to it without remark. It is clear that the general principle is what is in mind here, rather than its application in specific instances. Generally speaking, rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil. If one would be free from fear of the civil power, then, let him do good and he will have praise rather than punishment. It is true, as observed by Meyer, that when Paul wrote these words, "it was still the better time of Nero's rule;" but, as the same writer goes on to say, "the proposition has a **general** validity, which is based on the divinely-ordained position

of the magistracy, and is not annulled by their injustices in practice, which Paul had himself so copiously experienced." Let the ruler remember that "he is a minister of God....for good" (v. 4), and not for evil.

6. **"But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain"** (4). Those who advocate the abolition of capital punishment forget that the state has divine authority for bearing the sword and using it. The ruler is not only a minister of God for good unto well-doers, but he is also "the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The original charter of human government is written in the Noahic Covenant, and this has never been abrogated; it remains in full force:

> "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9: 5, 6).

7. **"Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake"** (5). Christians are to submit themselves to the civil authority, not in fear of its wrath, but in obedience to their own consciences as enlightened by the Word of God. They obey the government "for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-

doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king" (1 Pet. 2: 13-17).

8. **"For for this cause pay ye tribute also"** (6). The public officers must be supported, since "they are God's ministers, attending continually upon" the exercise of their duties in administering the affairs of government. "Tribute," here, is direct taxation for the expenses of state. Custom, in verse 9, is toll, or tax upon produce. Tertullian declared that what the Romans lost by the Christians refusing to bring offerings to the heathen temples was more than made up by their willing payment of taxes.

9. **"Render therefore to all their dues"** (7). Whether tribute, or custom, or fear, or honour, let not the Christian fail in any respect towards these public **ordained ministers of God** who occupy places of authority over him.

VI. The Law of the Yielded Life (8-14).

1. **"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another"** (8). The law of Sinai provided against debt: "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning" (Lev. 19: 13). And elsewhere the

Word warns against debt: "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender" (Prov. 22:7). But there is one debt that can never be fully cancelled; namely, the debt of love. We must go on loving, and as we do so we are in principle fulfilling the law: "for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law," so far as that other is concerned. The law against adultery, killing, stealing, lying, coveting, and every other sin against men, is all summed up in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (vs. 9, 10; compare Mt. 22: 39; Lk. 10:29-37).

2. **"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep"** (11). The great New Testament incentive to holiness is now brought forth. **"And that"** ought rather to read **"And this."** That is, "and let us do this"—live without debt except to love—for this great reason added to all the others; namely, that "now is our salvation nearer than when we (first) believed" (see *R. V.*). Our Lord's return is the "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1: 5). "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof"—i. e., make no pro-

vision for the gratification of selfish desires. All this will be accomplished if we really put on the Lord Jesus Christ. "So we say of friends," says Chrysostom: "'Such an one has put on such an one,' when we mean to describe great love and unceasing intercourse."

Our Lord Himself often used the truth of His return to stimulate His disciples to watchfulness and holiness, and so also did the writers of the New Testament epistles. It is to this blessed hope that Paul directs his readers in the closing paragraph of Romans 13. On this paragraph Dean Alford says:

"Without denying the legitimacy of an individual application of this truth, and the importance of its consideration for all Christians of all ages, a fair exposition of this passage can hardly fail to recognize the fact that the apostle here as well as elsewhere (1 Thes. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:51), speaks of the coming of the Lord as **rapidly approaching.** Prof. Stuart and others are shocked at the idea, as being inconsistent with the inspiration of his writings. How this can be, I am at a loss to imagine. 'OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN, NO NOT THE ANGELS IN HEAVEN, NOR EVEN THE SON, BUT THE FATHER' (Mk. 13:32). And to reason, as Stuart does, that because St. Paul corrects in 2 Thes. 2 the mistake of imagining it to be **immediately at hand** (or even **actually come,** see note there), therefore he did not himself expect it soon, is surely quite beside the purpose. The fact that the nearness or distance of that day was **unknown to the apostles,** in no way affects the prophetic announcements of God's Spirit by them, concerning its preceding any accompanying circumstances. The **'day and hour'** formed no part of their inspiration; the **details of the event did.** And this distinction has singularly

and providentially turned out to the edification of all subsequent ages. While the prophetic declaration of the events of that time remain to instruct us, the **eager expectation** of the time, which **they expresed in their day,** has also remained, a token of the true frame of mind in which each succeeding age (and each succeeding age more strongly than the last) should contemplate the ever-approaching coming of the Lord. On the **certainty of the event** our faith is grounded: by the **uncertainty of the time** our hope is stimulated, and our watchfulness aroused" *("The New Testament for English Readers").*

Hallelujah! Maranatha! Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

VII. The Yielded Life in Relation to Weak Brethren (14:1 to 15:7).

1. **"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye"** (14:1). The believer's normal attitude towards his weak brother in Christ is epitomized in this brief exhortation. Despite his weakness, he is a brother, and he ought to be acknowledged as such, received as such; and every action towards him should be in view of this relationship. The all-sufficient reason is given in the final verse of the section: "Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (15:7).

2. **"But not to doubtful disputations"** (1). The margin here is, "Not to judge his doubtful thoughts." The English Revisers have in their margin, "not for decisions of doubts;" and the American Revision has, in the text, "not for de-

cision of scruples." The meaning is plain. We are to receive our weak brethren as brethren, and not merely for purposes of argumentation. Receive them "as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."

3. **"For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs"** (2). This 14th chapter of Romans and the 8th of 1st Corinthians are devoted to the question whether Christians should eat meat which had been offered to idols. It was a "burning question" in the early churches. Large quantities of meat were brought to the numerous heathen temples and presented in the worship of idols. Of course, the idols had no use for it, and even the priests could not consume all of it, and therefore it was sold to the public through the markets. This made it almost if not quite impossible for one to discover whether the meat on his own table had not come from an idol's temple. The stronger Christians cared not for this, believing that they might "eat all things." They knew that "an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4). "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge," and these weaker brethren found themselves unable to eat of "a thing offered to an idol" (1 Cor. 8:7). To go on eating these things was to defile their conscience, and in order to be on the perfectly safe side, they ate herbs; that is, they confined their diet to vegetables.

4. **"Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth"** (3). The need for this exhortation may be readily understood. The strong in faith would be under temptation to despise or "set at nought" his weaker brother (see verse 10); while the weak in faith would be liable to censure his stronger brother. But this must be avoided: we must not despise our brother, nor judge him, "for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? (*R. V.*). To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (vs. 3, 4).

5. **"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike"** (5). Here was another problem, and one that may come nearer home, for it is a present-day problem. What is to be done in such a case? Some are stronger than others, and clearer on the doctrines of grace. They deny any man's right to judge them, "in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath: which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ" (Col. 2: 16, 17). They declare their liberty from the law, and insist that their freedom has been too dearly bought to be easily surrendered; they are constantly exhorting us to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5: 1). On the other hand, there are weaker breth-

ren who cannot see this at all. These dear ones are fearful; they are shocked to hear men talk of their "eternal security in Christ:" they are timid; they hope it will be all right and that they will somehow be "saved at last;" but they insist that "there is such a thing as being too sure." What then? how shall these dear ones be dealt with? are they to be despised? or, are we to enter into "doubtful disputations" with them, and seek to decide their scruples for them? Nay, since "God hath received" them, let us also receive them, and love them, and pray for them, and bear with them. Meanwhile, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." True it is, "brethren," that "ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5: 13). Ye must "take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak" (1 Cor. 8:9).

6. **"He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord"** (6). The remainder of this sentence is omitted from the Revision, because it is not found in the best manuscripts. Dr. Moffatt translates: "The man who values a particular day does so to the Lord. The eater eats to the Lord, since he thanks God for his food; the non-eater abstains to the Lord, and he too thanks God. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself; if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. Thus

we are the Lord's whether we live or die" (vs. 6-8).

7. **"For to this end Christ died and lived again"** (9). We quote the Revision, much to be preferred here. The purpose in Christ's death and resurrection was to establish His lordship over all—"that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living." In 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, it is written "that One died for all, therefore all died: and He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for their sakes died and rose again."

8. **"But why dost thou judge thy brother?"** (10). This challenge, addressed to the weaker Christian, is at once followed by another aimed at the stronger one: "Or why dost **thou** set at nought **thy** brother?" This is not the time for judging. There is a time coming when "the saints shall judge the world" (1 Cor. 6:2), but meanwhile, we are to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).

9. **"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God"** (10). This is the correct reading, rather than "the judgment seat of Christ," as in the King James Version. The thought of the passage is that each individual must answer for himself and not for another,

"for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (vs. 11, 12; compare Isa. 45:23; Phil. 2:10, 11). The exhortation of the thirteenth verse follows logically: "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." The judgment that is needed is self-judgment rather than the judging of others (1 Cor. 11:31, 32).

10. **"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself"** (14). Paul saw his liberty fully; he was not under law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14); he knew that the Lord Jesus had brought an end to the law (Rom. 10:4); that he had set aside the dietary requirements of the law of Moses, "making all meats clean" (Mk. 7:19, *R. V.*); and he taught clearly in all his epistles that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4, 5).

11. **"But to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean"** (14). In such a case, it is better to abstain, because "he that doubteth is condemned (that is, self-condemned) if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (v. 23); there-

fore he writes: "If your brother is being injured because you eat a certain food, then you are no longer living by the rule of love. Do not let that food of yours ruin the man for whom Christ died. Your rights must not get a bad name" (vs. 15, 16, *Moffatt*).

12. **"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"** (17). It is as if the Holy Spirit Himself had become tired of writing about eating and drinking, and longed to lead the Lord's people out of such low considerations and into the higher atmosphere of the kingdom of God. Observe the order of these elements in the kingdom of God; first righteousness, then peace, then joy, in the Holy Spirit. No peace apart from righteousness! It is when we have been justified by faith that we enter into peace with God (Rom. 5:1), and this peace leads to joy. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,....and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1, 2). This is the right view of Christian living. As Moffatt again translates: "You must not break down God's work for the mere sake of food! Everything may be clean, but it is wrong for a man to prove a stumbling-block by what he eats; the right course is to abstain from flesh or wine or indeed anything that your brother feels to be a stumbling-block. Certainly keep your own conviction on the matter, as between yourself and God; he is a fortunate man

who has no misgivings about what he allows himself to eat. But if anyone has doubts about eating and then eats, that condemns him at once; it was not faith that induced him to eat, and any action that is not based on faith is a sin" (vs. 18-23).

13. **"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves"** (15:1). The rule of Christian love given in 14:21 is here reiterated and amplified: "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (v. 2), and for the very good reason that "even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me" (vs. 2, 3; compare Ps. 69:9; 1 Pet. 2:23).

14. **"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"** (4). This illuminating reference to the Old Testament Scriptures is used here to sum up the exhortation begun in 14:1, and is followed by the prayer of 15:5, 6, and the final word of v. 7.

VIII. Confirming Promises and Showing Mercy (15:8-13).

1. **"Now I say"** (8). The true reading is, "For I say," as given in the Revision, and Dr. Stifler explains that the "for" introduces "the long passage following to show how Christ re-

ceived both parties. The word 'meat' and the words 'strong' and 'weak' are not again used; but instead the two nationalities in the church appear, the Jew and the Gentile, showing that the division in dietary matters ran in the main between these two. The Jew would be the weak man, the Gentile the strong; but there were doubtless exceptions on both sides."

2. **"That Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers"** (8). The ministry of Christ was "to the Jew first." Great and wonderful promises had been made to Israel, and these promises must be redeemed; so Christ "became a servant to the circumcised in order to prove God's honesty" (*Moffatt*); or, "in vindication of God's truthfulness—in showing how sure are the promises made" to the fathers (*Weymouth*). Many of these Old Testament promises were fulfilled in connection with the first advent of Christ. Every jot and tittle was accomplished which had relation to "the sufferings of Christ," and the remaining promises were reiterated and confirmed. The Lord Jesus is coming again to fulfill in every jot and tittle the promises having to do with "the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:11).

3. **"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy"** (9). "Mercy" is the emphatic word here, and is in contrast with "the promises" of the preceding verse. God had made no

promises directly to the Gentile nations, and so the ministry of Christ to the Gentiles is a matter of pure mercy.

4. **"As it is written"** (9). The apostle now brings forward four Old Testament Scriptures to prove that this showing of mercy to Gentiles was foreseen. These quotations have not the character of promises to Gentiles, but are nevertheless predictive of the work of the gospel among them: (1) "For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name" (Ps. 18:49); (2) "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people" (Deut. 32:43); (3) "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud Him, all ye peoples" (Ps. 117:1); (4) "There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust" (Isa. 11:1, 10).

5. **"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost"** (13). "Hope," in this verse, is the same as is translated "trust" in the 12th verse (see *R. V.*), and in the 13th verse it is preceded in both instances by the definite article. It is **the** hope that is referred to—"that blessed hope" of Tit. 2:13. The 1911 Bible translates: "Now the God of the hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in the hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit."

THE EPILOGUE

(15:14—16:27)

The body of the epistle closes with the benediction of 15:13. However, there is much important teaching in the concluding paragraphs.

1. **"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren"** (14, 15). Paul had written to the Romans not because they were not "full of goodness," but because they were. The case is not as in Jude 3, but more like that in 1 Jno. 2:21, 27. He writes not so much to instruct, as to "put them in mind" of what they already know.

2. **"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles"** (16). This verse is highly figurative. Paul writes of "ministering as a priest (see the Greek) in the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Dean Alford says: "The apostle is using a figure in which he compares himself to a priest, and the Gentiles to the sacrifice which he was offering. The Gentiles themselves are the offering; so Theophylact, 'This is my priesthood, to preach the gospel. My knife is the Word, ye are the sacrifice.' The language is evidently figurative, and can by no possibility be taken as a sanction for any view of the Christian minister as a sacri-

ficing priest, otherwise than according to that figure, namely, that he offers to God the acceptable sacrifice of those who by his means believe on Christ." Conybeare and Howson translate: "Yet I have written to you somewhat boldly in parts (of this letter), to remind you (rather than to teach you), because of that gift of grace which God has given me, whereby He sent me to minister for Jesus Christ, bearing His glad-tidings to the Gentiles, that I might present them to God, as a priest presents the offering a sacrifice well-pleasing unto Him, hallowed by the working of the Holy Spirit;" and a footnote by the same translators reads: "literally, **'to minister for Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, a priest presenting an offering in respect of the glad-tidings of God that the Gentiles might be offered up as an offering wellpleasing unto Him.'** The same thing is said under a somewhat different metaphor, 2 Cor. 11:2." Dr. Stifler says: "He thus writes because of the apostolic 'grace' (Rom. 1:5; Eph. 3:8) given him by God that he should be a minister, a spiritual priest, to the Gentiles, not to offer a sacrifice for them, which was already done, but to minister to them the gospel, that they themselves might be an acceptable 'offering' to God (Eph. 5:26, 27; 2 Cor. 11:2). The offering is acceptable because it is sanctified, made holy, by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Paul gave men the gospel, and God gave such of them as believed the Holy Spirit, and by these two

means they became a fit offering to God." Num. 8:14-16 is an illustrative passage on this point. Moses was commanded to separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: "And thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering."

3. **"I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ"** (17-21). In this paragraph Paul speaks of his great privilege as a minister of the gospel to the Gentiles, and points to the "mighty signs and wonders" accompanying his ministry as a proof that Christ was working through him "by the power of the Spirit of God." He had preached the gospel "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum," not building upon foundations already laid, but preaching where Christ had not been named, thus fulfilling the Word of God as written in Isa. 52:15, "To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand."

4. **"For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you"** (22-24). He declares his purpose to come to Rome when he should take his journey into Spain. Whether Paul ever reached Spain is uncertain, but we know that he did reach Rome, though as "a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:9-15; 15:22-24; Eph. 3:1; 4:1).

5. **"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints"** (25-33). Paul's reference here is to the collection which he was engaged in gath-

ering for the poor among the Christians at Jerusalem. There are numerous references to this collection in his epistles (see also Acts 24: 17). The churches of Macedonia and Achaia had been pleased to make this contribution, and Paul commends them for it, for "their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" (compare 1 Cor. 9: 11). When he has finished this task of ministering to his brethren in Jerusalem, he intends to go via Rome to Spain, and he is sure that when he comes he will "come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." He beseeches the Roman brethren to pray for him in connection with this Jerusalem mission, and he makes this appeal "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit." We read in Galatians that "the fruit of the Spirit is love," and here we are reminded of the love which the Holy Spirit bears unto His people. The chapter closes with the apostolic benediction: "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

6. **"I commend unto you Phebe our sister"** (16: 1-16). This chapter is headed by Dr. Scofield, "The outflow of Christian love." It is beautiful to observe the variety of the greetings sent to those in Rome who were personally known to Paul. He himself had never visited the Roman church, but all roads led to Rome, and it had come to pass that many of his personal

friends had gone to Rome from the churches which he himself had been instrumental in founding. We have heard before of Priscilla and Aquila, and of some of the others mentioned in this list. The 13th verse is particularly touching: "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." This is a pathetic reference to the tender relationship between God's children. Rufus was Paul's brother in the Lord, and Rufus' mother had at some time ministered to Paul as a mother, and so he speaks of her as his own mother.

7. **"Now I beseech you, brethren"** (17-20). He warns them against those who would cause divisions and introduce schism into the sweet atmosphere of spiritual unity suggested by these relationships of which he has been speaking. These false teachers were to be avoided, for they "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The obedience of the Roman saints is known far and wide. Paul is glad on this account, but he exhorts them to further obedience in turning away from false doctrines, for he would have them "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." The promise of the 20th verse is to encourage them in patient waiting: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (compare Gen. 3:15). This section also closes with a benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

8. **"Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you"** (21-24). Paul has been sending salutations to Christians in Rome; he now sends salutations from Christians who are with him. "Timotheus" and "Lucius" are better known to us as "Timothy" and "Luke." Tertius is Paul's amanuensis. Gaius, now Paul's host, is doubtless the man alluded to in 1 Cor. 1:14. He is also the host "of the whole church," for the Corinthian church was probably holding its meetings in his house. A striking contrast is presented by "Erastus the chamberlain of the city," a high municipal official, and "Quartus a brother," who joined in these Christian salutations. Quartus' name means **fourth**, just as Tertius is also a Latin numeral, and means **third**. These men, it has been conjectured, were formerly occupied as galley slaves, or in some other occupation where they were numbered instead of named. The Greek, in verse 23, reads, "Quartus **the** brother," instead of "**a** brother;" he is just "Brother Quartus." From a nameless condition he had been exalted to the position of a holy brother (Heb. 3:1) in Christ (compare 1 Sam. 2:6-8), and was in an equal brotherhood with the city chamberlain.

9. **"Now to him that is of power to stablish you"** (25-27). This closing paragraph is of great doctrinal importance as touching the person of Christ. (1) God is "of power to stablish" His

people; (2) He stablishes them according to Paul's gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ; (3) this preaching of Jesus Christ by which God stablishes His people must be a "preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery." There is much preaching of Jesus Christ which does not establish God's people, because it is not according to Paul's gospel, nor "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began," but was made manifest by revelation to the apostle Paul (compare Eph. 3:1-7). The Lord Jesus Christ "according to the revelation of the mystery" is (1) "the Mighty God" from eternity (Isa. 9:6); (2) "Immanuel, God with us" in flesh (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:21-23); (3) "our Passover sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7; compare Ex. 12:12); (4) "the Great Shepherd" in resurrection (Heb. 13:20, 21; Rom. 1:4); (5) "High Priest over the house of God" (Heb. 10:21; 3:14); (6) "Christ in us, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26, 27; Gal. 2:20); (7) the coming King over the whole earth (Zech. 14:9; Jer. 23:5, 6).

"TO GOD ONLY WISE, BE GLORY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST FOR EVER. AMEN."

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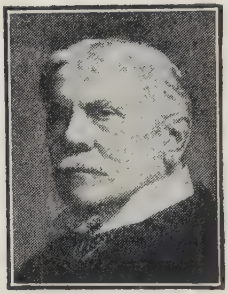

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